

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
Workshops | Reader galleries | Interviews | Inspiration | Artist Q&A

Cover art by Adam Hughes
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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

IMPROVE YOUR
PHOTOSHOP SKILLS
How photo-collage will
change your art!

BREAK INTO

COMIC ART

Paint purrrfect comic characters! **Adam Hughes**
exclusively reveals how he creates Catwoman!

**PLUS... JIM LEE SHARES
HIS ICONIC BATMAN ART!**

**FREE
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CUSTOM BRUSHES
SCREENTONES

Interview

BILL SIENKIEWICZ

Why style matters – the godfather
of the graphic novel reveals all!



Bag yourself new comic skills
from Tommy Lee Edwards!

Inside

**LEARN THE GOLDEN
RULES OF COMIC ART**
IMPROVE YOUR
FANTASY SKETCHES
**PAINT AN ATHLETIC
ZOMBIE WRESTLER**

Issue 67 | March 2011 | Printed in the UK | £5.99
Future MEDIA WITH PASSION
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More than just a pretty face.



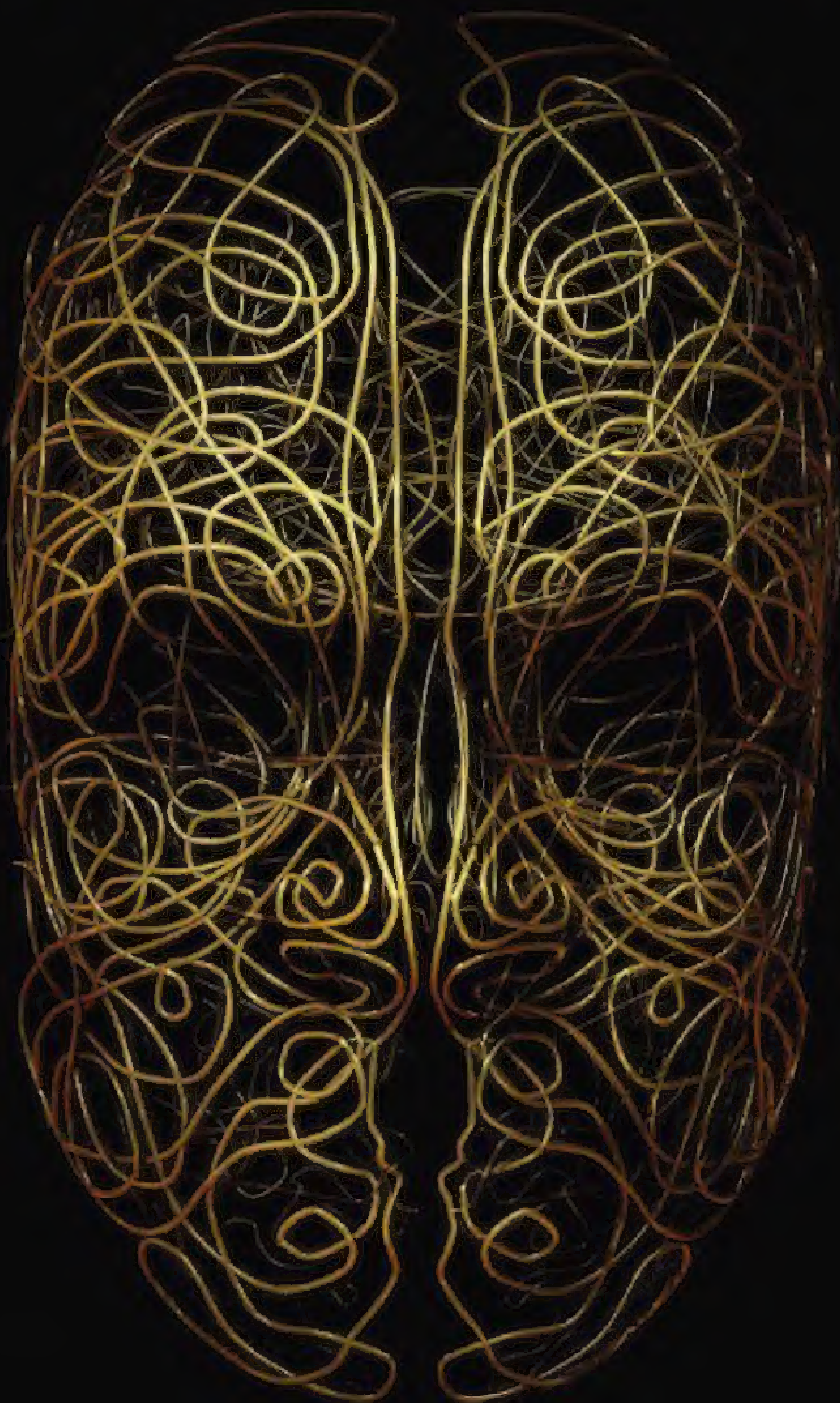
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with 3D characters



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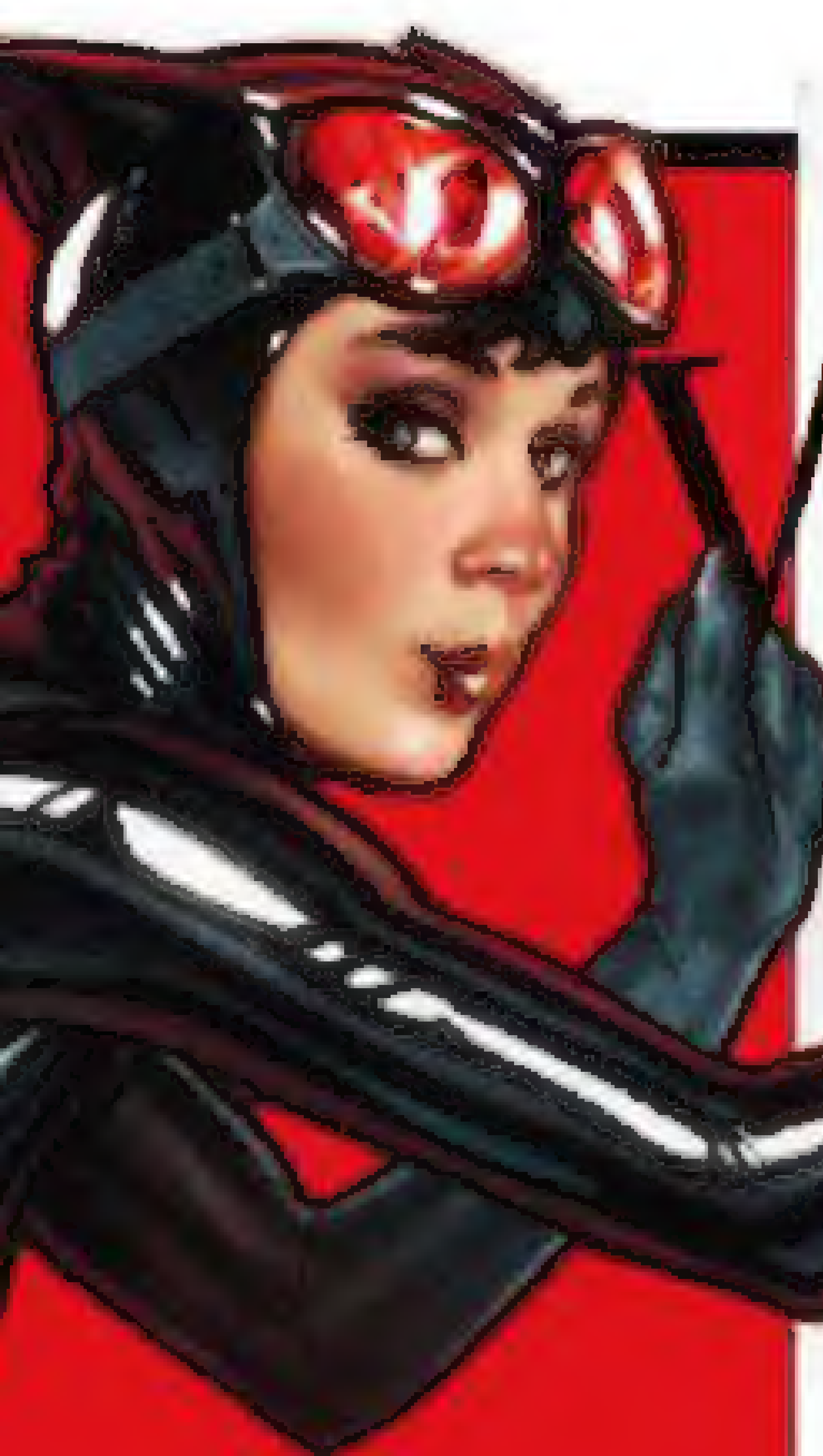
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Welcome... to... hey, stop thief!



Art can provide many memorable moments. Whether you happen upon a new favourite artist while browsing the shelves at the book shop, see a new art form or technique emerge on forums and blogs long before it becomes mainstream, or simply discover a piece of

art that's just the most beautiful thing you've ever seen, art can make your day a whole lot better.

Some of the artists in this issue may have been responsible for a few of these heart-skipping moments. Perhaps you still remember strolling into the local comic shop to be met by Bill Sienkiewicz's #1 cover of Elektra: Assassin. Or maybe you stopped dead in your tracks on seeing one of Adam Hughes achingly beautiful renditions of a female for the first time. Perhaps you've tried to copy Jim Lee's artistic style from the ever-popular The Uncanny X-Men, to help you understand just how he does it.

I'm proud to say that all of these artists (and many more) are in this issue of ImagineFX. I'm sure that seeing their work and sharing in their experiences will help you discover something new about what you create. And if you have a memorable art moment to share about a piece of art or artist, let me know at the email address below.

Enjoy the issue. Some people couldn't keep their hands off it...

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



Tell us what you think!

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DAZ 3D

Illustration by: David Brinnen

In progress

How Adam Hughes stole our cover...



When we decided to have a comic-themed issue, there was only one artist that Claire wanted for the cover – Adam Hughes. We discussed many poses and ideas, including dipping Catwoman in wet paint.



Settling on the idea that DC's most famous Gotham burglar would be stealing our logo, Adam got to work on a suitably elegant pose featuring the naughty girl nabbing our 'FX'.

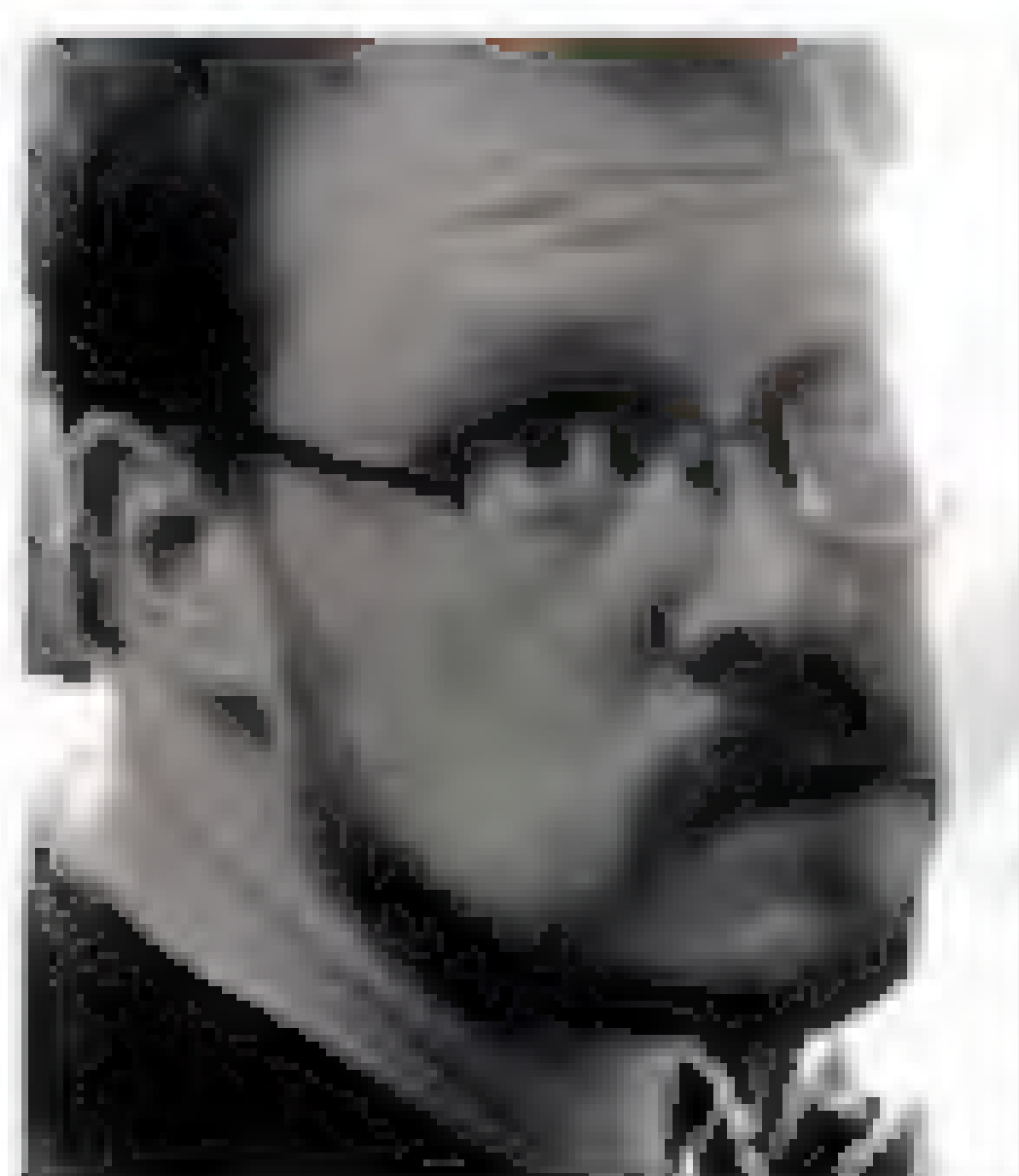


The final render fleshed out the idea, with Catwoman's swag bag filling out the cover. Art editor Paul added golden metallic ink to our 'FX', ensuring that Catwoman couldn't resist her prize.



ImagineFX Cover artist

Inspired by Vargas and the Golden Age pin-up artists, Adam Hughes is a modern master of the genre. Learn his techniques this issue!



Adam Hughes

COUNTRY: US

SOFTWARE: Photoshop

WEB: www.justsayah.com

One of the world's most sought-after cover artists, Adam Hughes specialises in 'Good Girl Art'. His naturalistic pin-up style brings a sexy, playful tone to his comic heroines, including Wonder Woman. Adam's rendition of Catwoman set a new standard and fast became a fan favourite. Read his workshop this issue and discover how he creates his iconic character art! 



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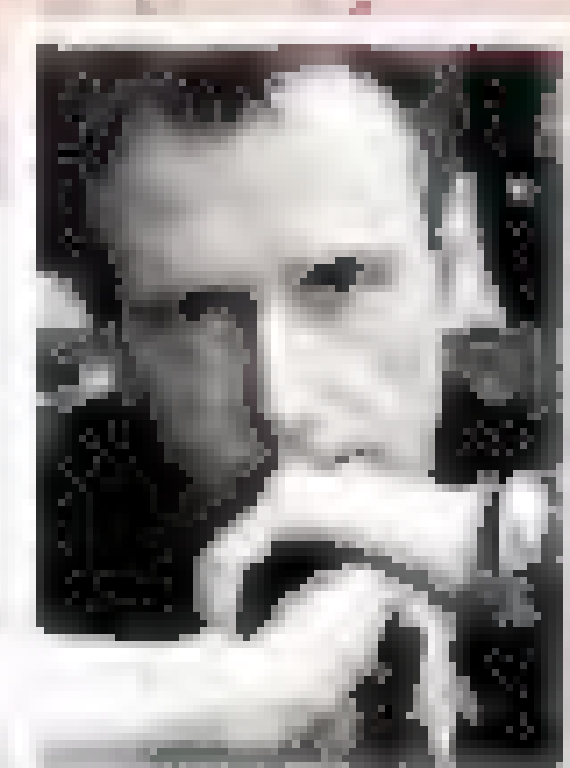
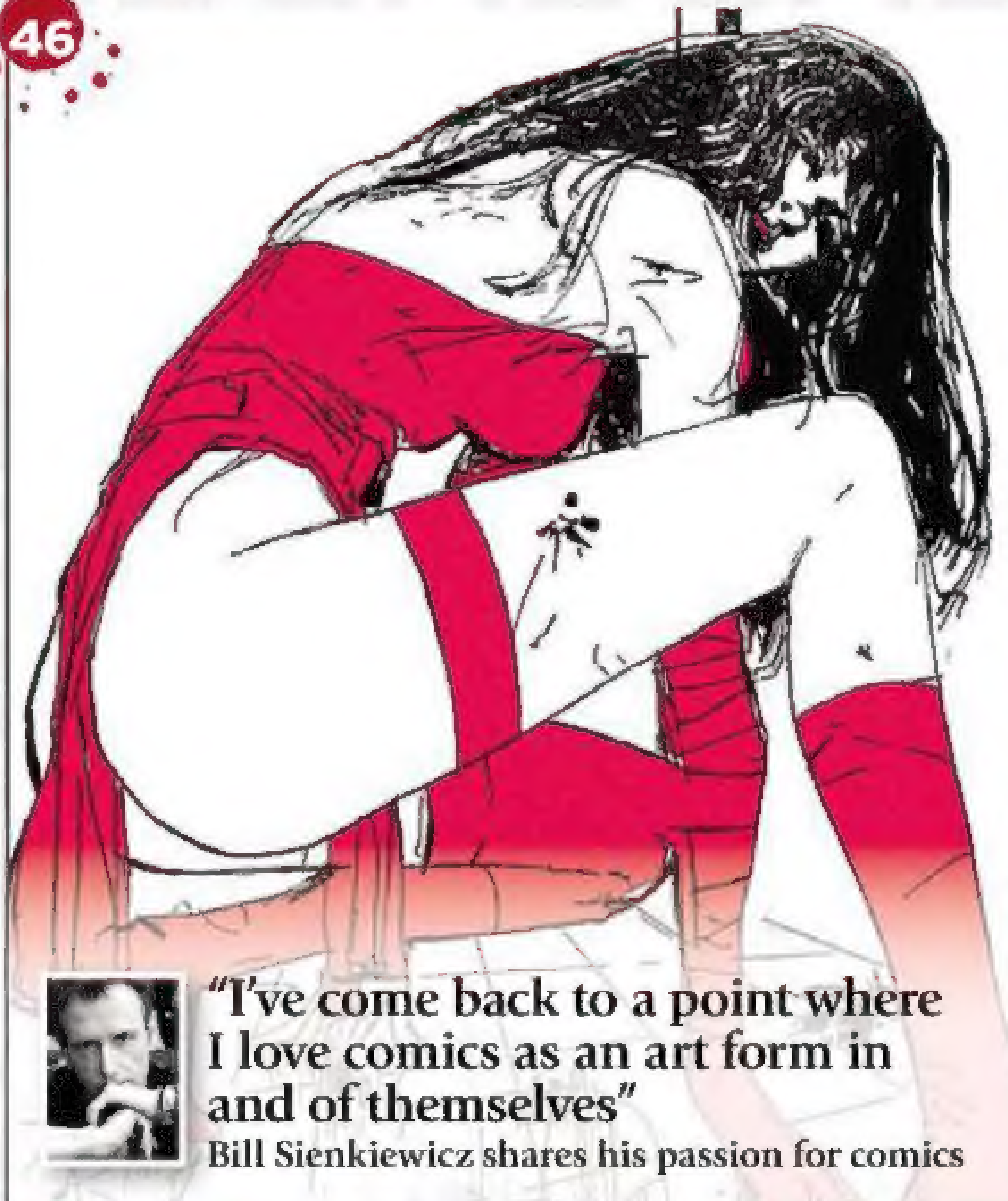
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"I've come back to a point where I love comics as an art form in and of themselves"

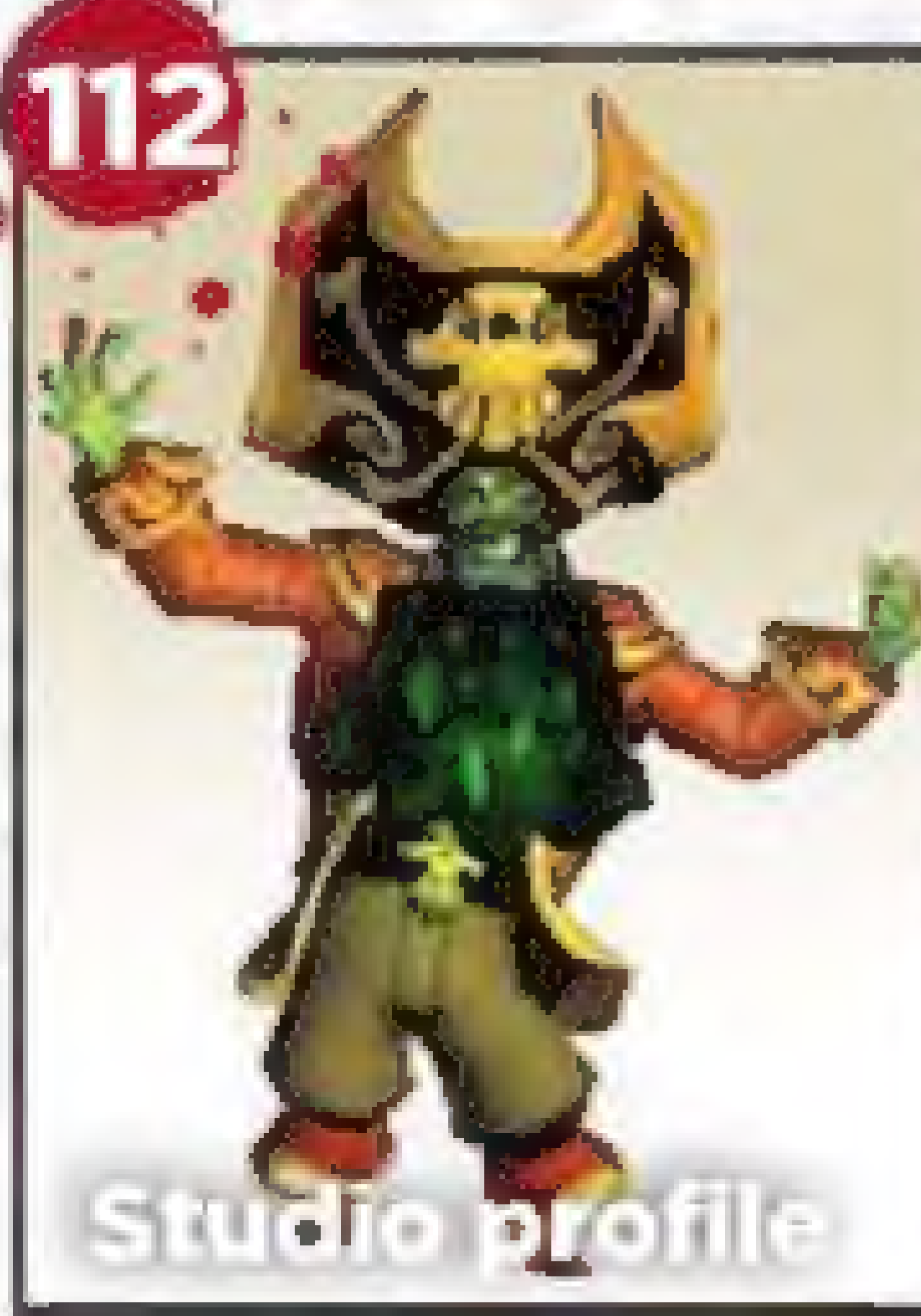
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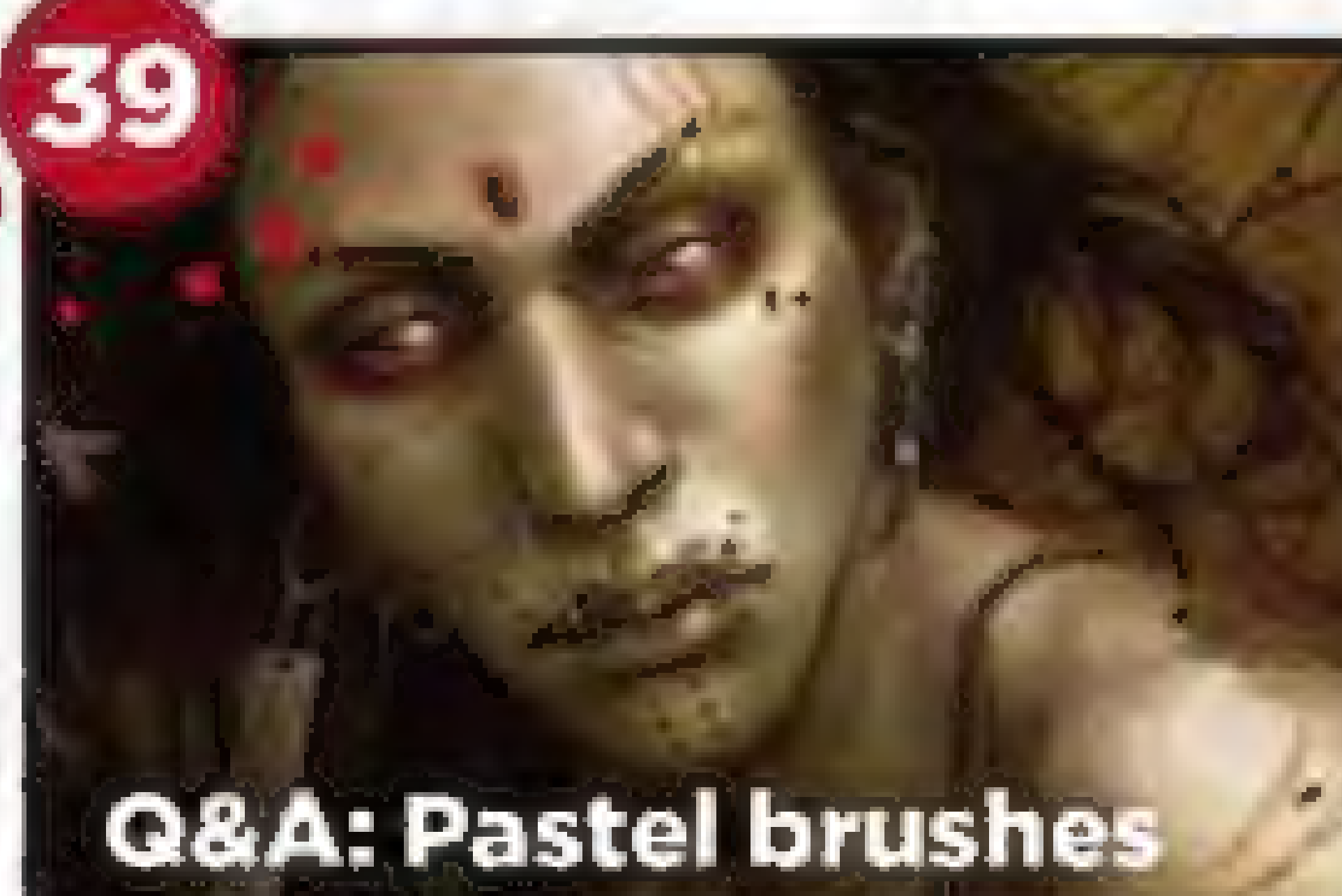
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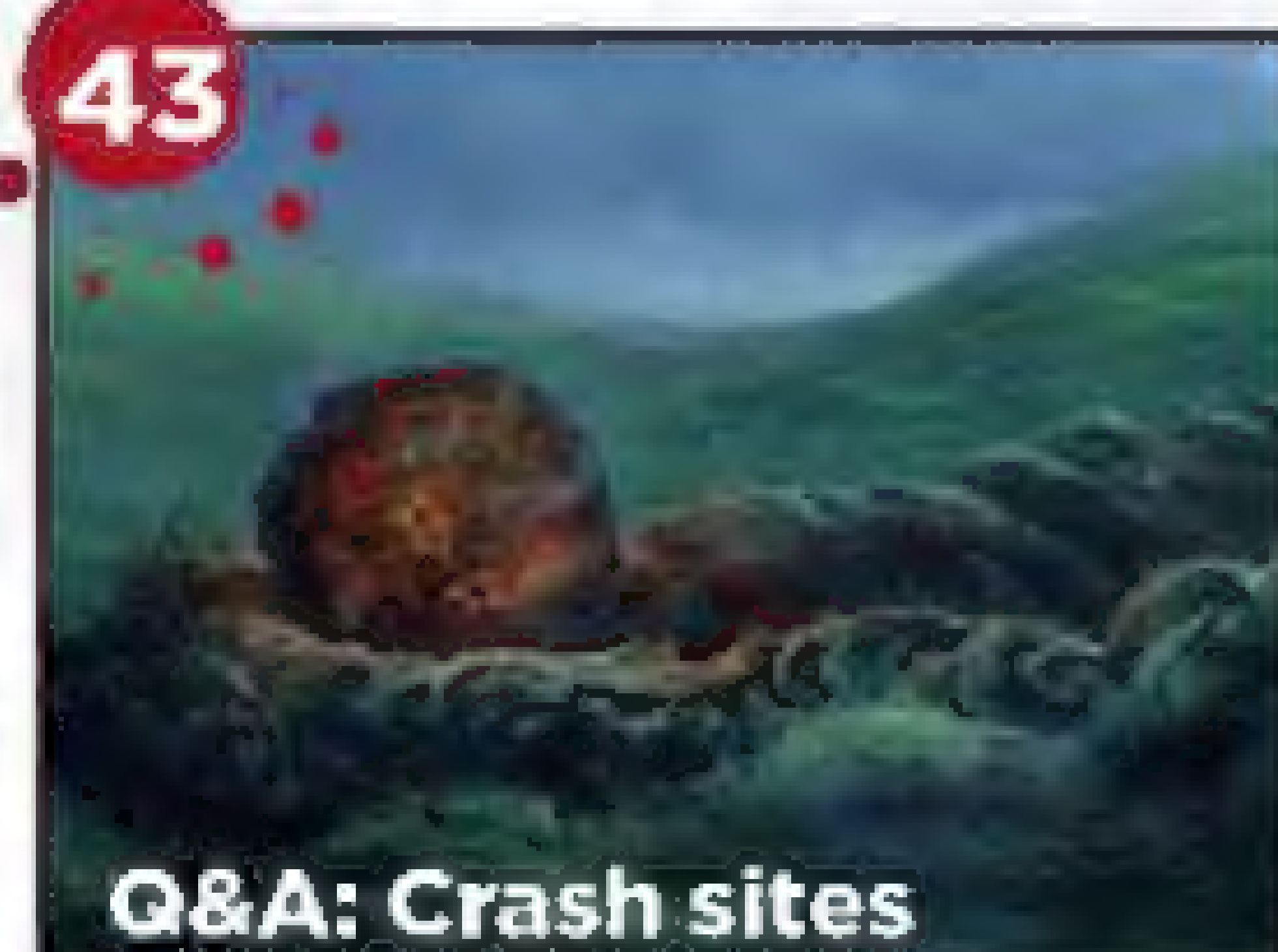
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Jim Lee

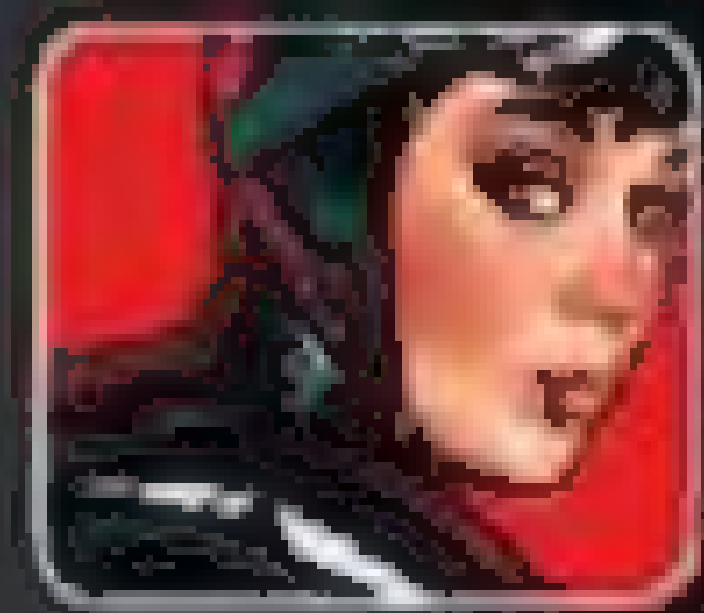


Reader
FXPosé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

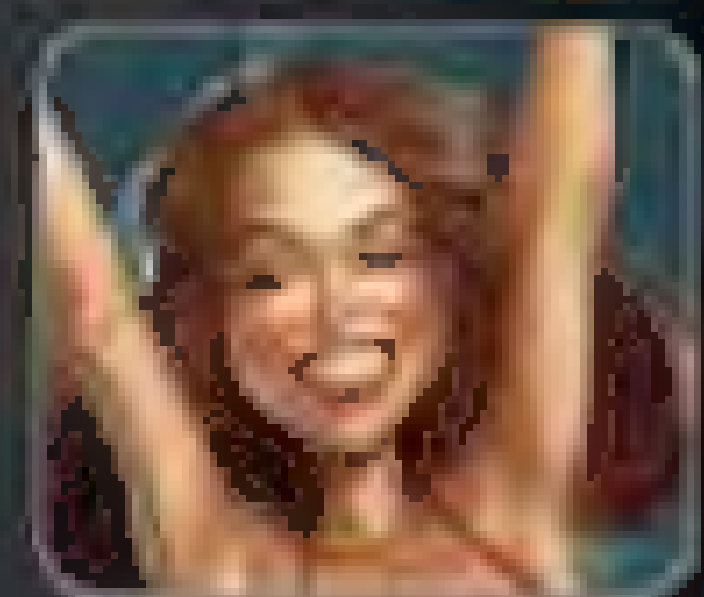
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ImagineFX Workshops

Advice and techniques
from pro artists...



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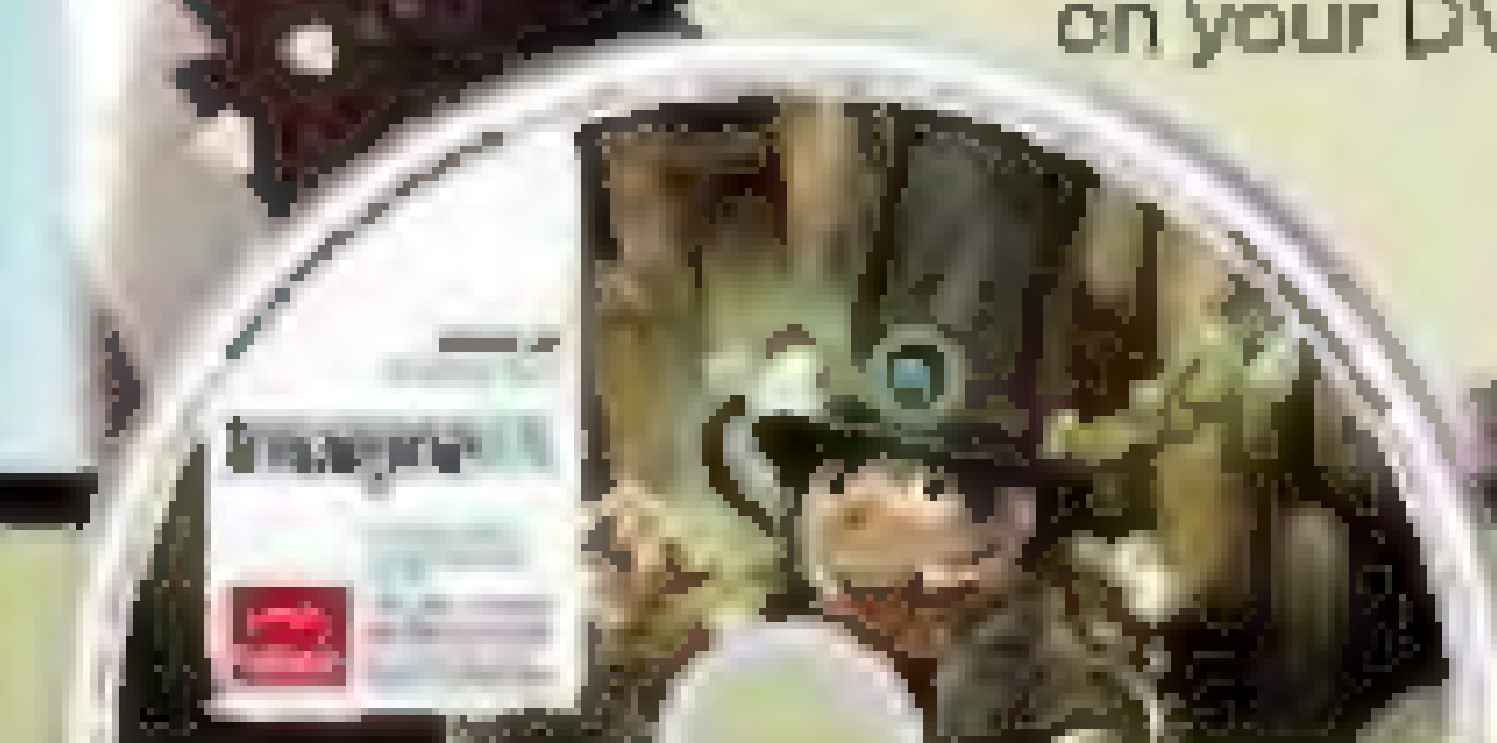
Artist Q&A

38 This month's Q&A topics...

Place patterns on your characters' clothing, create a natural smile, paint foliage in Photoshop, make female characters look sultry, produce complex tattoos, add glowing light sources, plus lots more!



Video workshops on your free DVD...
Where you see this badge you'll find an accompanying video workshop in the corresponding folder on your DVD.



ON YOUR DVD

This month's essential art resources...



Manga Studio EX4
Create professional-looking manga and comic art.

Comic screentones
Give your comic compositions that authentic edge.



Turn to page 114 for more... ➔

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX
ARTIST
MONTH

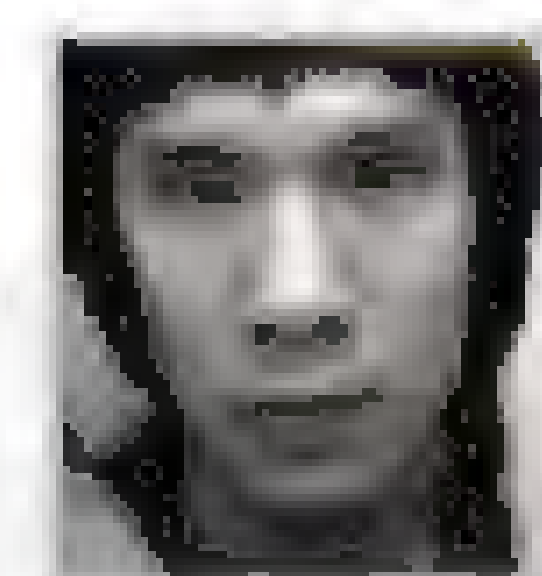
Wanchana Intrasombat

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop

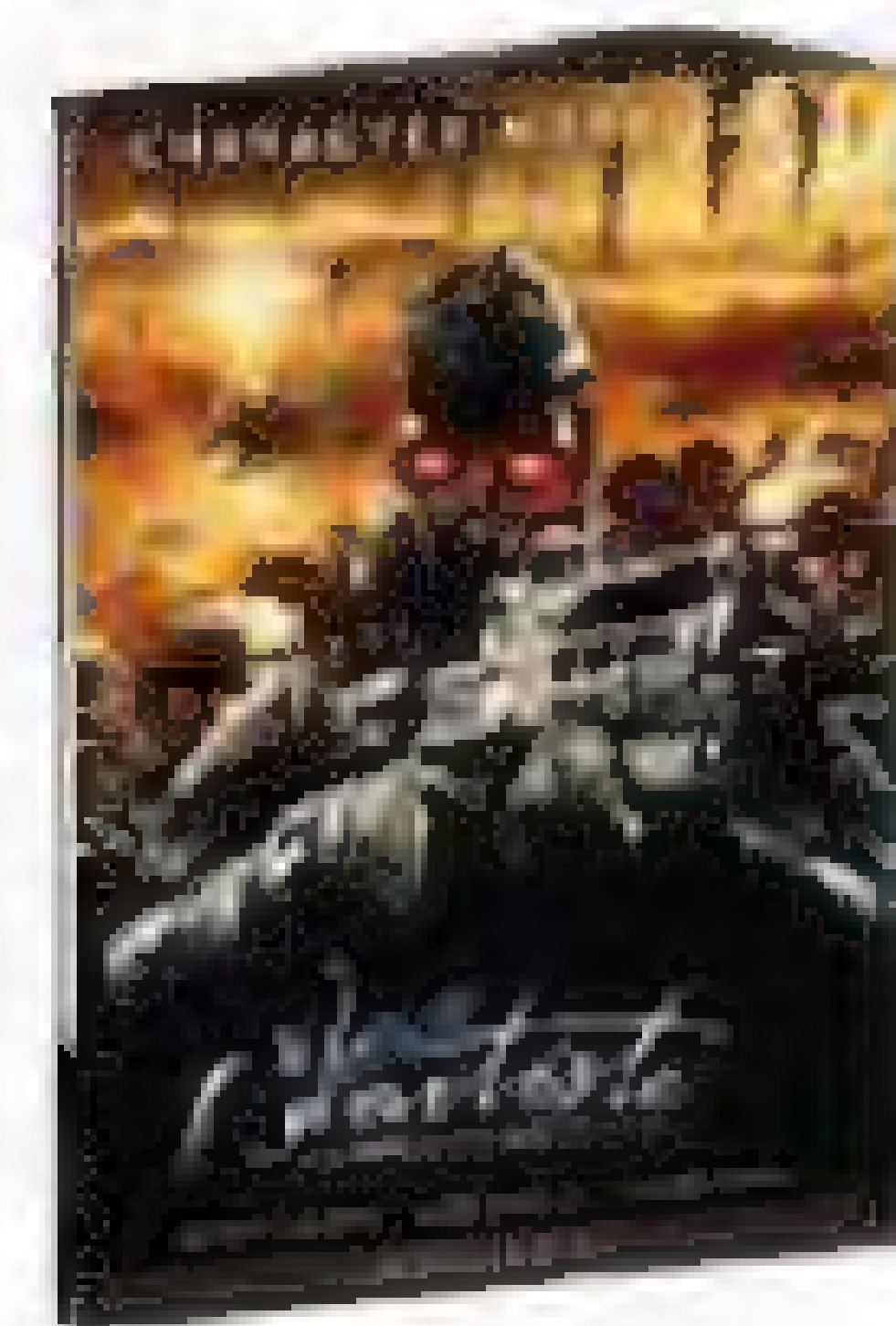


In 2008 Wanchana finished a bachelor's degree in fine art, majoring in traditional painting in oil. Since then he's been developing his skills in digital painting and graphic design. "Last year I started freelancing," he says, "and have produced works that have been seen around the world."

1 CANDY UFO "This is one of my character designs from my 'UFO team'. I created it using Photoshop and it's a personal piece done for fun. The story is that an alien came from another galaxy with his UFO (candy-robot) and nicked a load of energy that he needed (in his case, it's candy) to help people on his planet."

2 MY LOVER ROBOT "A gift for my girlfriend - she needed to be a member of the UFO team, and the idea is that the robot came to the Earth to catch my heart. I made a robot inspired by her character and her dog, Nudee (a pet alien)... Happy birthday!"

3 THE BEGINNING OF FREEDOM "This picture is inspired by a combination of a dream of mine and the old movie Free Willy, which I saw when I was young. The concept is about freedom. I wanted to ride on it and fly into the sky!"



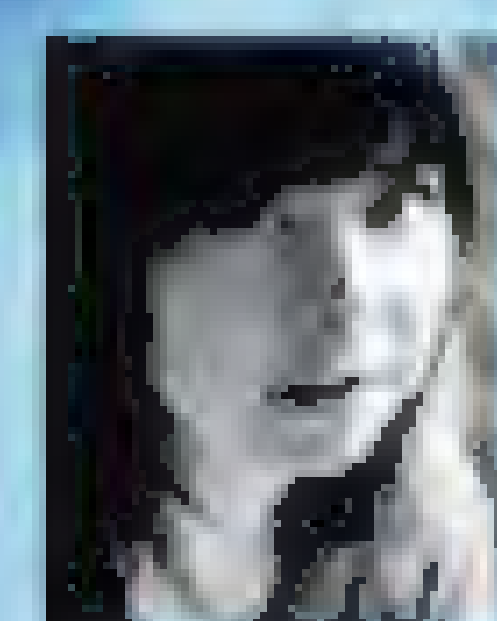
ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Wanchana wins himself a copy of Exotique 5 and Character Modeling 3. To find out more about these two indispensable art resources, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.



Artist crit

Comic book artist Fiona Staples is entranced by the mix of realism and fantasy on display here



"This is such a fun, energetic image. The lovely background details, like the rainbow and shooting stars, really add to the painting's dreamy quality."



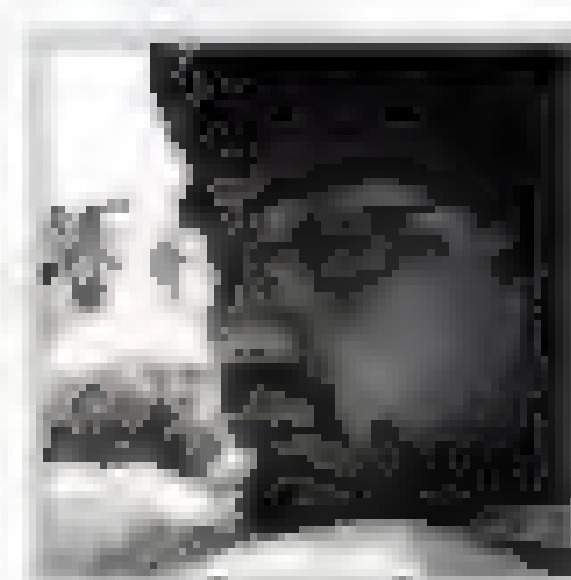
Andres S Blanco

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



Andres admits that his choice of profession was not without some tension. "I didn't study design or architecture, the common career choices in Chile for those who like to draw," he says. With no real video game or entertainment industry to speak of in his country, Andres studied fine arts. As a result, "for me there are no barriers dividing the world of fine art or art for video games," he says.



1 WHITE MISHINO MAID This illustration is of a special character from an as-yet unreleased iPhone game called Sweet Punishment, by Mutant Games. It's been quite a fun job, especially because I was given complete stylistic freedom, so I tried something a bit different, and worked all the colours in Painter."

2 WEAPON SELLER EINNYS "This is the first of a series of personal pieces called Girls and Weapons. Einnys owns all the swords and she sells them as well - there's a character in every RPG who does this job. "Here I experimented with defining materials using the specials brushes in Photoshop CS4. I enjoy expressive paintings as well as impressionism and the pre-Raphaelites, all combined with my taste for Japanese aesthetics."



🇺🇸 Nick Robles

LOCATION: US

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Painter



Born in a small town in Louisiana, Nick was brought up in a family that have always been "very focused on arts and crafts.

It was from them that I got started on the path to illustration," he says. Having been introduced to digital art by some friends that he made online, Nick now works primarily in Photoshop and Painter as a freelancer doing personal commissions. "And soon I hope to go from those private jobs to something even grander," he says.

THE DREAMING HAWK "I'm a big fan of the manga series Berserk. I've recently been doing paintings of some of its characters and this one just came out great!"

WE FOLLOW HER "A self-challenge piece that went better than I'd hoped! The objective was to put more than one or two characters in the focus of a single illustration, and although the story-telling in the image is somewhat basic, I think the characters each reflect who they are very well."

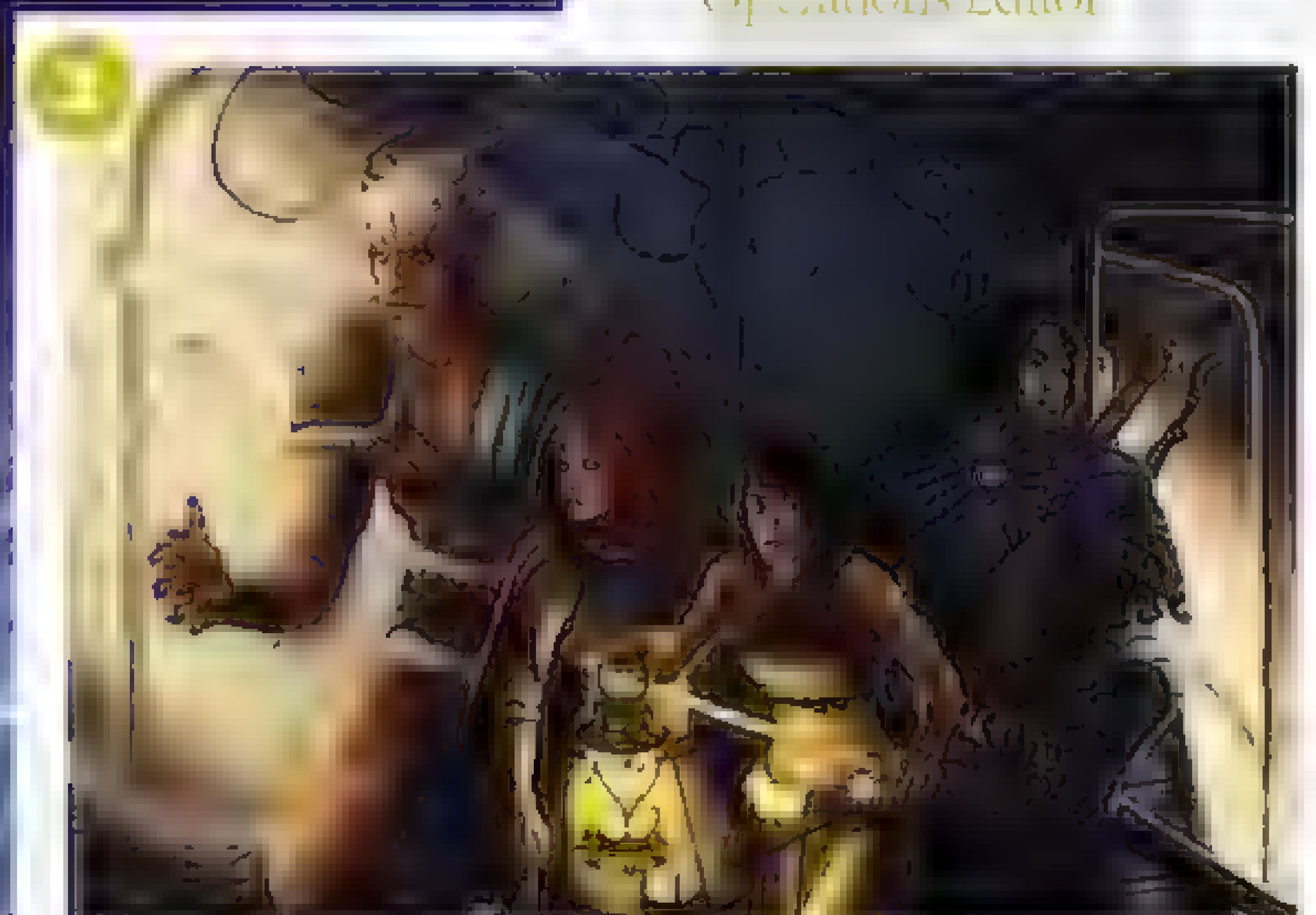
IMAGINE.FX CRIT



"Nick's take on Griffith, one of the leads from the Berserk series, perfectly captures the aloof, selfish nature of the character. Should have given him a haircut, mind..."

Cliff Hope

Operations Editor





+ Andrew Jones

LOCATION: England

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Growing up in the 80s and early 90s, Andrew fell in love with the hyper-realist paint and airbrush illustration that became

popular at the time. "Many were shockingly realistic, but contained the fantastic or impossible, as though the artists could take a camera straight into their imaginations," Andrew says.

"People like Bob Wakelin, Dermot Power, Oliver Frey, Drew Struzan and Glenn Fabry were big inspirations during my early development."

It's no surprise, then, that his work combines elements of surrealism, fantasy and pin-up art to produce something totally his own.

WEIRD DREAMS "This is my tribute to Herman Serrano, who created the bizarre video game of the same name in 1989. The game was important to me, because it was my introduction to surrealism, aged nine."

THE MARTIAN DINER "Just a bit of fun, combining my love of the retro Americana look with a sci-fi twist."

ZOMBIES ATE MY NEIGHBORS "Another tribute to one of the most awesome games ever made. This was a lot of work, but it was a lot of fun drawing all those classic monsters. I'm a bit of a B-movie nut."





Matthew Byle
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Photoshop



A recent graduate of the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, Matthew sees illustration as "a great way to let my thoughts escape and come to life, as well as constantly challenging me to grow and improve as a better artist, both technically and stylistically."

With the aim of freelancing on a full-time basis, he's currently pursuing a side-project. "It's a short comic that I'm hoping will grow into something much larger," he says.



WHALE! "This piece was created for a new skateboard line, located in Metro Detroit, called Mobil Skateboards. It was drawn out in graphite on Bristol paper and scanned in to Photoshop for the colouring. I'm a big fan of whales and they're something I always come back to at some point in my work."

DOOMBOTS! "A personal piece, which was inspired by an online artist challenge that was already over - yet I had to get my idea out on paper. It was a great side-project that I was really trying to get some type into and make it work with the piece. My usual technique of graphite and Photoshop was used in creating it."



"Matthew's efficient line work is really emphasised by keeping the colour work flat and sympathetic. Applying this technique to his Doombots! artwork results in a bold, graphical cover that would stand out in your local comic shop."

+ Timo Karhula

Finland

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Photoshop



"I've got a bottomless well of imagination," says Timo, but my love for art came from old-school fantasy artists like Frank Frazetta, Larry Elmore and Jeff Easley." Timo is also inspired by his previous work at an advertisement agency. "That means I'm capable of producing graphic designs and layouts for presentation purposes, plus I enjoy creating full-colour artwork for environments, props and character designs." Timo is currently looking for freelance work.

1 **WARLORD** "One day I was testing out some new brushes I created, so after about half an hour of scribbling I started to see some interesting shapes form. This was a kind of experimental painting to test my use of textures, but I guess it turned out quite well."



Tommy Scott

LOCATION: US

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EMAIL: tommyscottart@gmail.com

SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop



"I was one of those kids who picked up a pencil and never put it down," says Tommy. He applied to the College for Creative

Studies in his junior year of high school. "I was accepted into their illustration department, in which my focus was the entertainment industry," he recalls, "and now I spend my days creating illustrations and concept art."

MOTOKO KUSANAGI REDESIGN

"This is the main character from the Ghost In the Shell anime series, Stand Alone Complex. I chose to redesign her and make her younger for the Comicon Challenge 2010 via gameartisans.org."

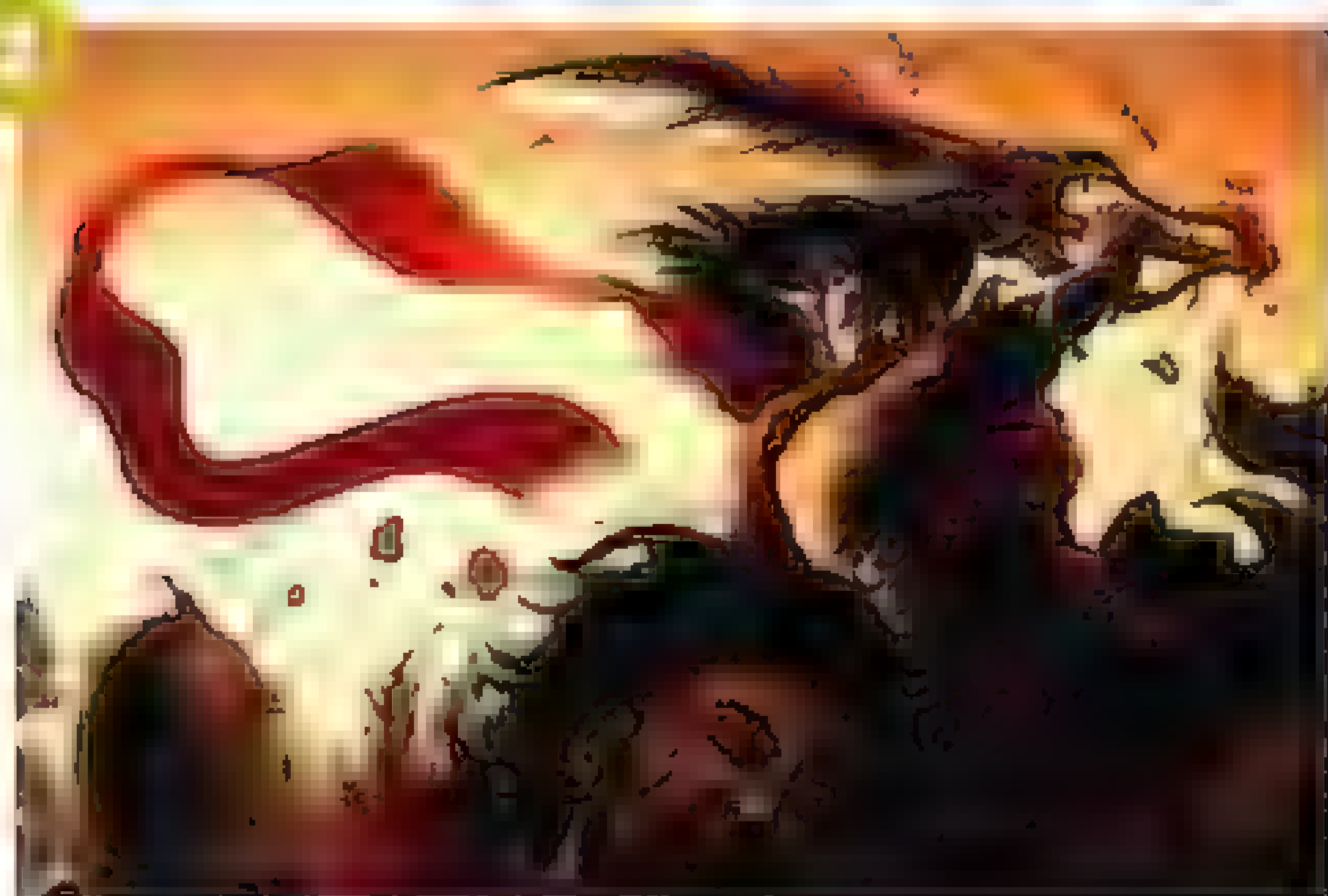
CRIMSON RIDER "This piece was fun because I could be as ridiculous as possible, but I still kept it reasonable - except for the large sword, which I was convinced to put in there through multiple critiques, and a lot of time in the conceptual stage."

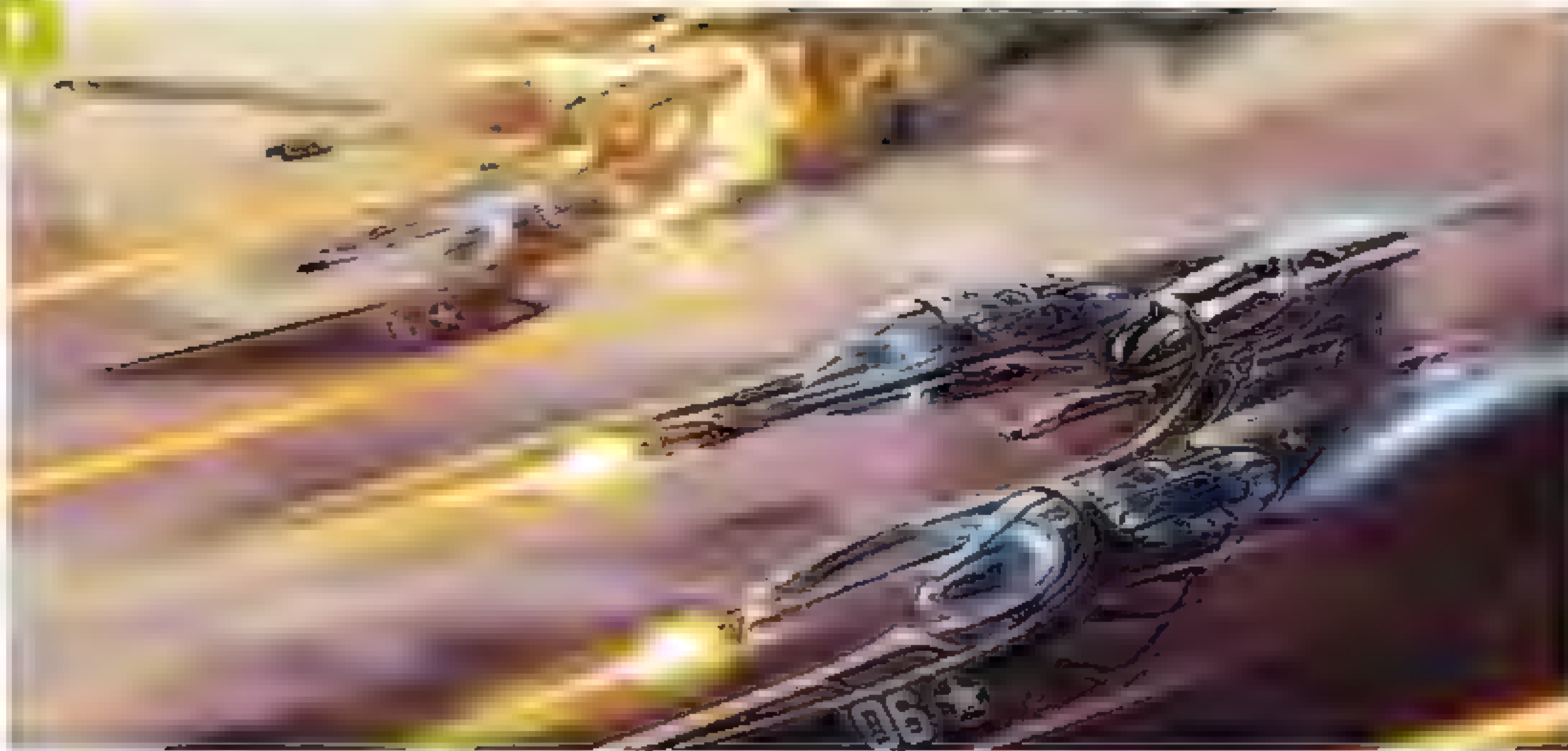
IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Tommy's restraint lends his characters a distant look, so it's nice to see him overcome his conservative urges and give his barbarian a larger-than-life sword with which to dish out rough justice on the battlefield."

Ian Dean
Deputy Editor





Jimmy Manton

Australia

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jimmymanton85@gmail.com

Photoshop



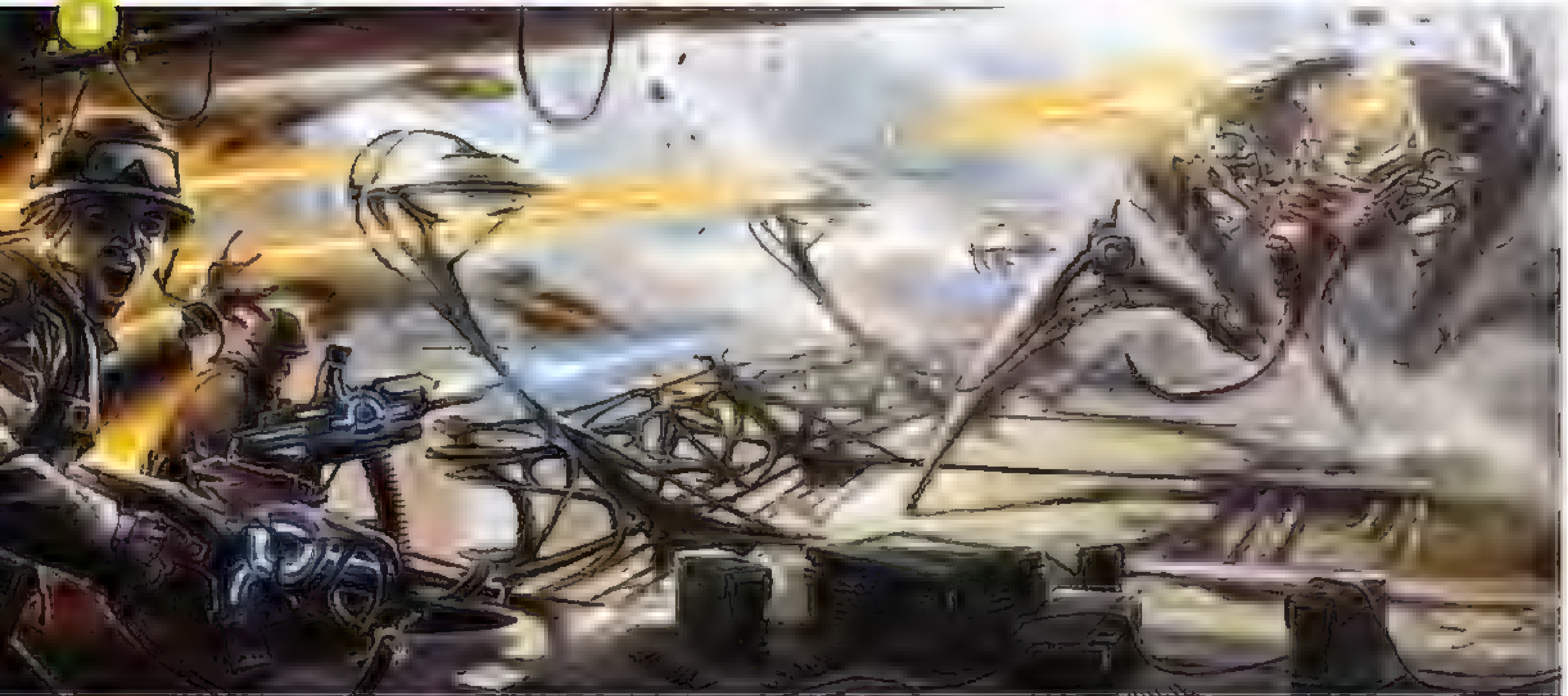
Self-confessed sci-fi nut Jimmy had considered becoming a concept artist for some time. "It was when I got round to seeing the new Star Trek movie that I decided I had to give it a crack." Watching Kirk and co seems to have done the trick. Jimmy left his job at a city design firm and is now involved in a range of publications that are set to go global this year. Keep an eye on www.godsandtitans.com for more of his work.



FIREMOTH "This is a concept piece for a short-range fighter. The design is intended to reference World War II fighter planes, with a sleeker, more futuristic edge. I also appropriated the design qualities of Art Nouveau, using whiplash lines and referencing nature – in this case, a moth."

CRETACEOUS PURSUIT "This piece is an homage to the awesome art that used to adorn the boxes of Dino-Riders action figures, an 80s cartoon and toy line. This painting was done quickly, but it's one of my favourites."

INVASION, WAVE 1 "This was the first time I'd attempted to paint a cohesive action panel. I deliberately placed many chaotic elements together as a personal challenge. While there are as many failures as triumphs present in this piece, its execution was a great learning curve."





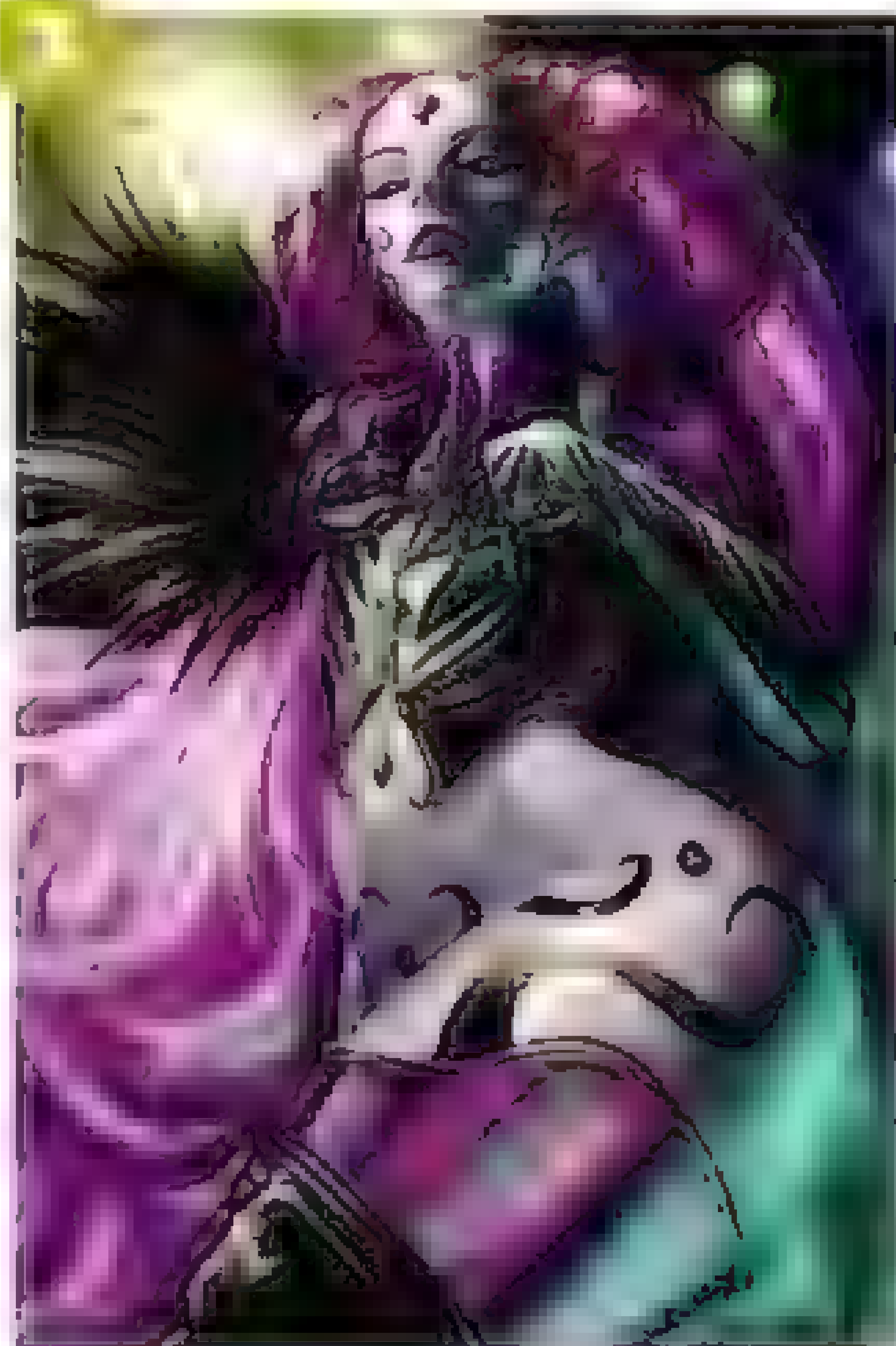
The Kaili Kaos Campaign
Bringing Chaos to Order

Andrew Blackman

LOCATION: Barbados
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EMAIL: cassidybainse@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Andrew was born in London in 1981 and immigrated to Barbados in 1989, where he soon discovered that he excelled in art at primary school. "I'm mostly self-taught due to the lack of focus on artistic studies in my small Island community," he says. "I worked as a graphic designer at a sign company for five years, where I picked up my digital art skills. Now I work as a freelance illustrator and graphic designer."



THE KAILI KAOS CAMPAIGN "This piece has no story behind it. I just had an urge to paint something abstract and colourful. I was admiring the way colour appeared in nature, especially among animals. I was also inspired by the look of some fashion ads in their depiction of youth culture."

THE FOUNTAIN "I painted this image to commemorate the female form, which is one of my favourite subjects. The character is an incarnation of chaos, so I wanted it to have an abstract feel. The colours are muted to complement the pale complexion."

PARADE OF THE FALLEN "This is Zencii, a character from a comic I want to work on. It's probably the first time I managed to paint reflections and shiny objects in a halfway decent fashion. It was also fun to exaggerate the female proportions."

IMAGINEFX CREW



"These explorations of the female form really show off Andrew's painting skills. Not to mention his subtle handling of lighting, colour and embellishment that gives the images plenty of depth."

Claire Howlett
Editor



Ivan S Kashubo

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, ArtRage



As with many artists, Ivan came to digital painting after years spent studying traditional art. "Computer graphics, concept art,

sketches – I was totally carried away by all these things," he says.

Having worked as a designer in publishing, Ivan set his sights on becoming a concept artist within the games industry. "So nowadays I'm the lead artist for an online company," he tells us, "creating characters, scenes, weapons and so on – that's what I'm doing and fond of these days." Passion for creating is Ivan's main drive, "and as long as it moves me forward, I'm not going to lose my way."



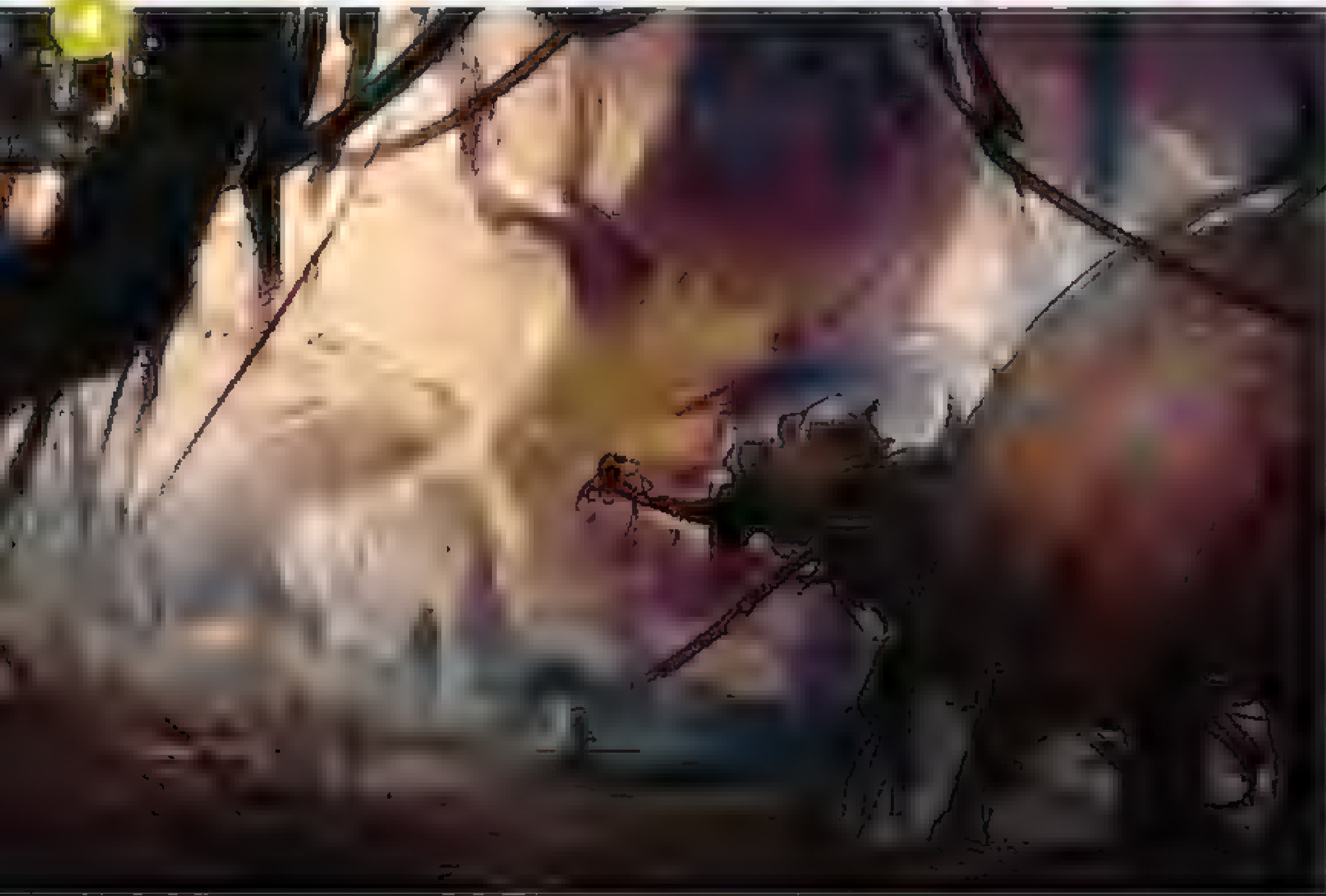
DEAD CITY "This was created for Destiny Development (www.ddestiny.ru) as a pre-loader to an online game. The idea behind the scene is the dead city: massive destruction, dirt, garbage and derelict houses. Everything was put together in Photoshop."

MONSTER FACE "I wanted to create a portrait of a monster. Having gone through several references, I imagined a stretched face with sharp eyes. The idea was to express the character's temper in its depths. I'm a fan of Dave Rapoza's art – his tutorials are really inspiring."

ALIEN "M" "Another alien portrait. I started with the linear sketch, then added the general half-tones in black and white, followed by colours and details. It's my standard approach, although sometimes I start with colours when a specific idea is at hand. For greater expressiveness, I used pink in the main areas of the portrait. To deepen the contrast, I applied the Dodge tool in the bright spaces, the Burn tool in the dark ones and a little Noise filter through the half-tones."

BEFORE "The idea of this painting was to create an atmosphere of mysticism and futurism. At the beginning, everything was painted in greyscale. When the general objects and composition were ready, I began to add colours. I used custom brushes and dual brushes. It was a rapid sketch, with no intention of getting into details – in quick painting, you grasp the feeling and try to convey the atmosphere."





IMAGINEFX CRIT



"It's a well-known concept for games, but Ivan's deserted city is particularly eerie, with hints that it hasn't long been 'dead'. Add to that the composed, regal alien portraits, and Ivan's clearly got a range of skills and styles at his disposal."

Berey Neale
Staff Writer

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

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Taking over the big screen

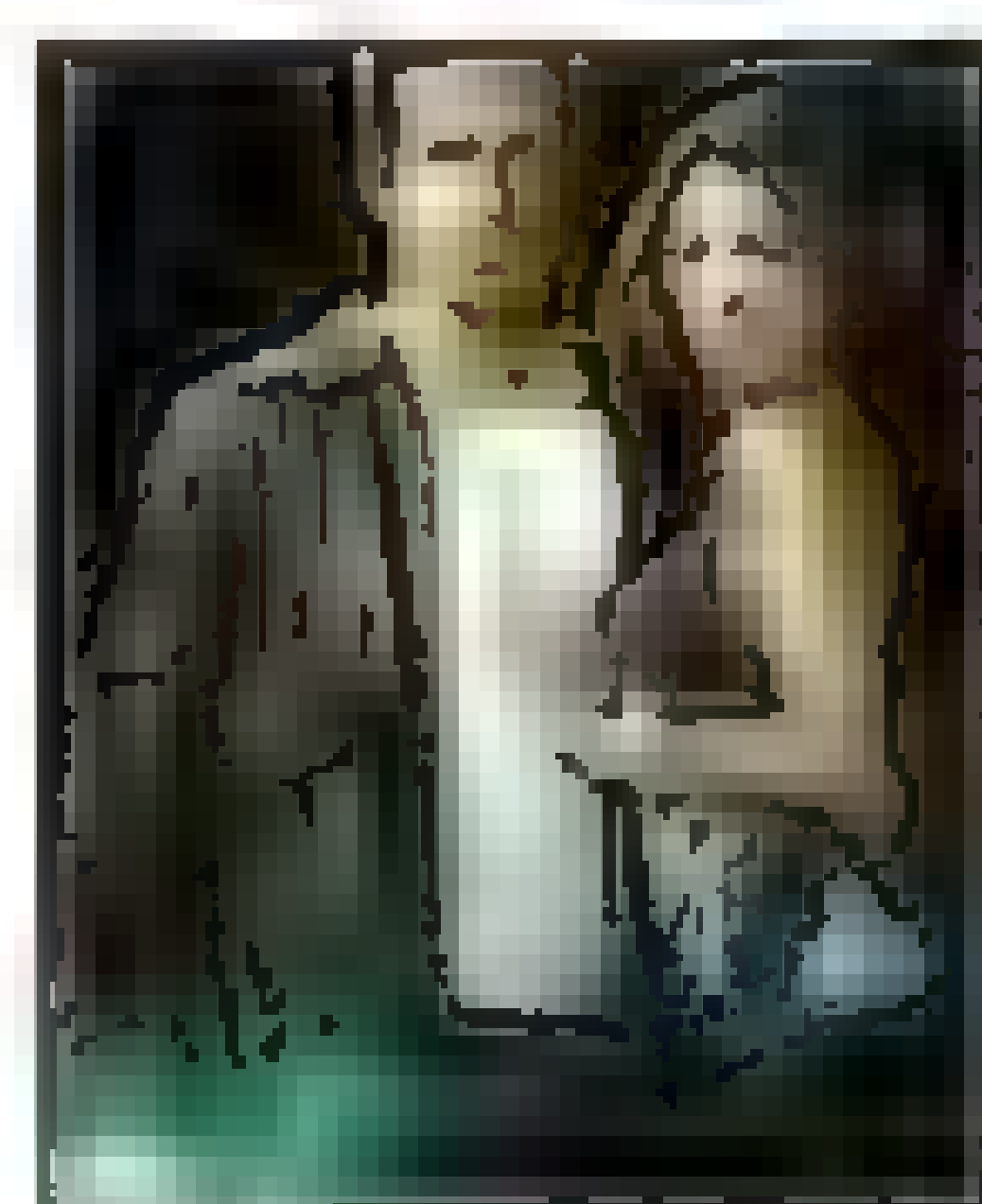
With a brand-new swathe of comic-based films due this summer, concept artists have been busy visualising superheroes for cinema

"How do you sell galactic space Vikings riding their horses on a Rainbow bridge?" asks concept artist Vance Kovacs. "That's a new one for me."

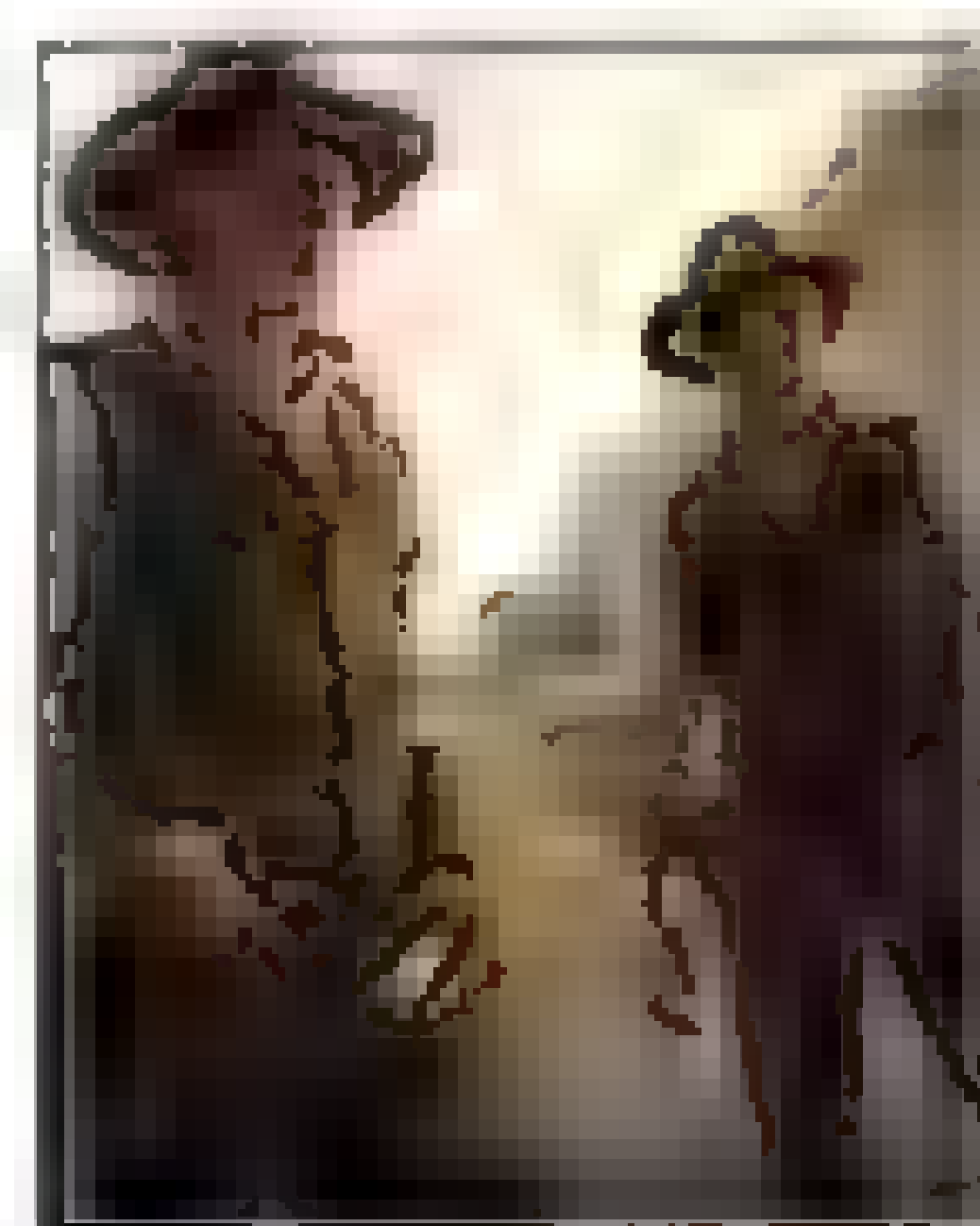
Many similar questions have been asked by concept artists across the industry, with several new adaptations of superhero comics set to hit the big screen throughout the coming year. As you might have guessed, one of the big new riders of Marvel's summer action Thor, which comes out in June, alongside DC's Green Lantern. Later in the summer will be introduced to Captain America: The First Avenger and the quirky Cowboys & Aliens based on the comic by Ed Brubaker and J. Michael Straczynski.

In the case of Marvel, the look and feel of movie adaptations from the comic universe is well established, coming from the Spider-Man, X-Men, the Wasteland and

Cowboys & Aliens isn't as well known as some of the other big-screen comic adaptations, enabling its filmmakers to deviate from the source material



Good looking leads aside, care was taken to make the rich Green Lantern universe work up on the big screen.



on Mon Films. But with a new wave of superheroes, there are still challenges to meet.

Henry Thomas was excited to see Captain America. "We know with this guy, and feel needed to fly, that the established Marvel movies," he says. "What was unique was that this was a

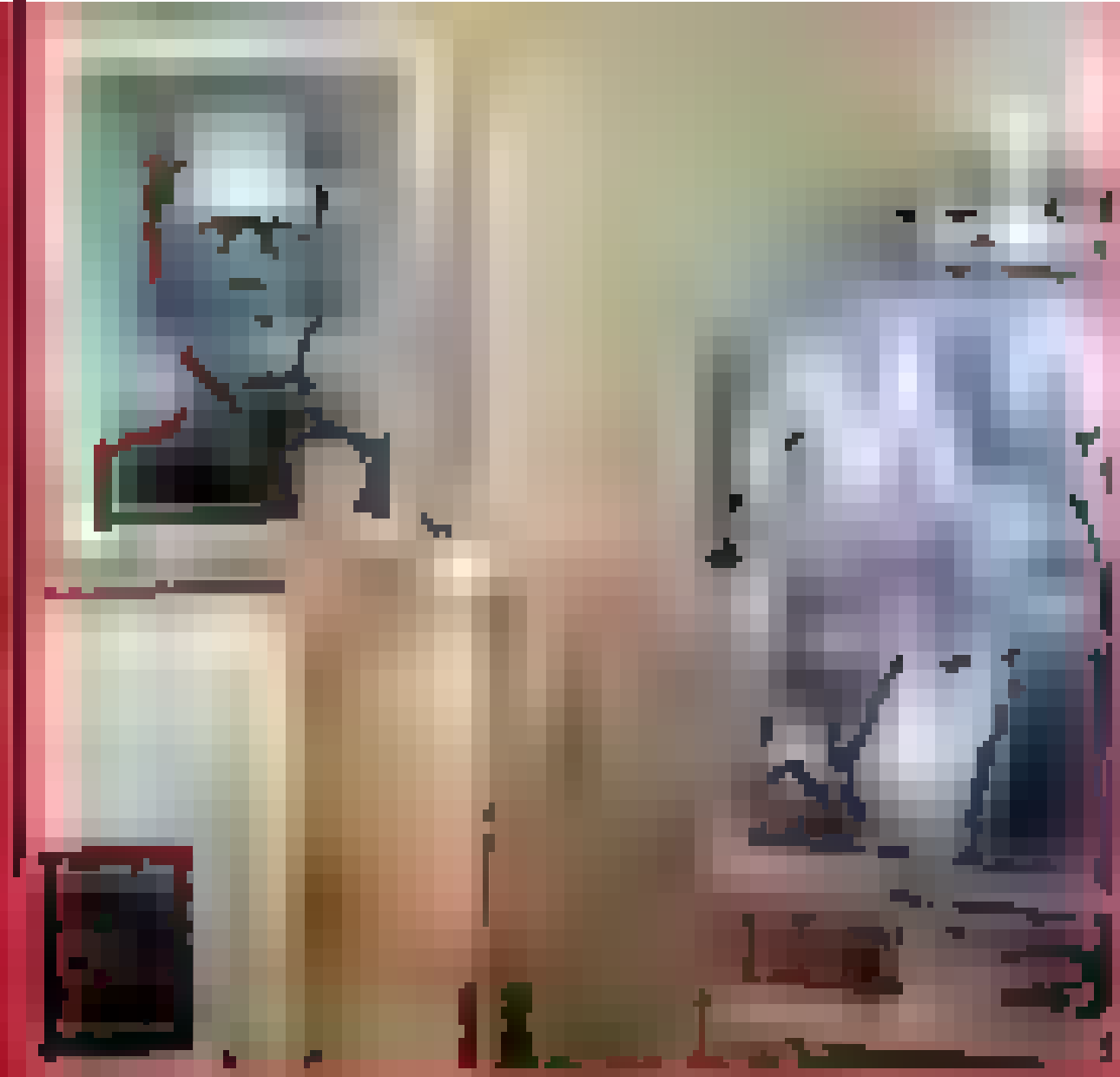
period piece taking place during World War II. The trick was to marry this history with the spirit of a comic book hero."

DC is also to unleash one of its most potent characters on the big screen in the form of The Green Lantern. Henry also had a hand in shaping this picture's visuals, and worked closely with director Martin

“Bringing Thor to the big screen with no apologies was the way to go” Vance Kovacs



The Green Lantern's concept artists helped director Martin Campbell with some of the comic's more fanciful elements, such as the planet Oa.



REANIMATED ARTIST

Greg Staples shows us round his studio, and explains why a painting of Boris Karloff is a reminder that achieving perfection should not be a one-off affair. **Page 24**



LONDON CALLING

Could it be a new era for the great San Diego comics? The organiser of the London event certainly hopes so. Seconds out round one. **Page 27**



BRAZILIAN STRIPS

Check out some dynamic South American comic art, along with other great imagery that's caught our eye in the Planet of the Arts roundup. **Page 28**



“The trick was to marry the history of World War II with the spectacle of Captain America”

Henrik Tamm

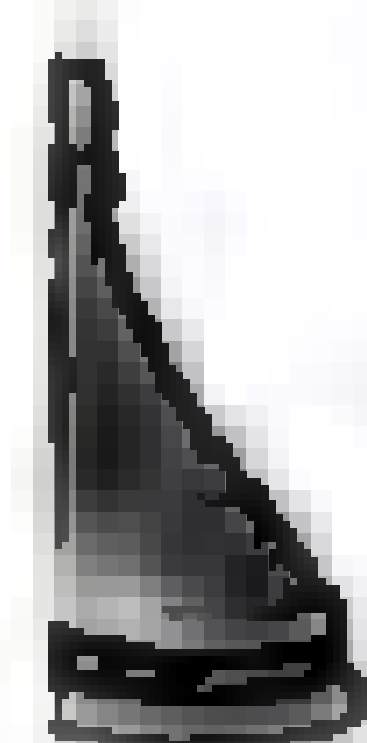
Campbell and the art team I was relying on the concept artists to help him figure out what Captain America's HQ (the Green Lantern Corps) had and how and why the Green Lanterns worked. That was a really fun time and we came up with some great stuff. It was a really fun time. There was obviously a vast treasure of comic history to draw from but Martin also wanted to give it a new look. It was a challenge to work on it. It was a challenge to work on it.

The Cowboys & Aliens graphic novel that came out in 2006 has become quite hard to

The producers of Captain America wanted his somewhat outlandish costume to fit in with the World War II setting.



Concept art of the Red Skull, who's the long-time enemy of Captain America

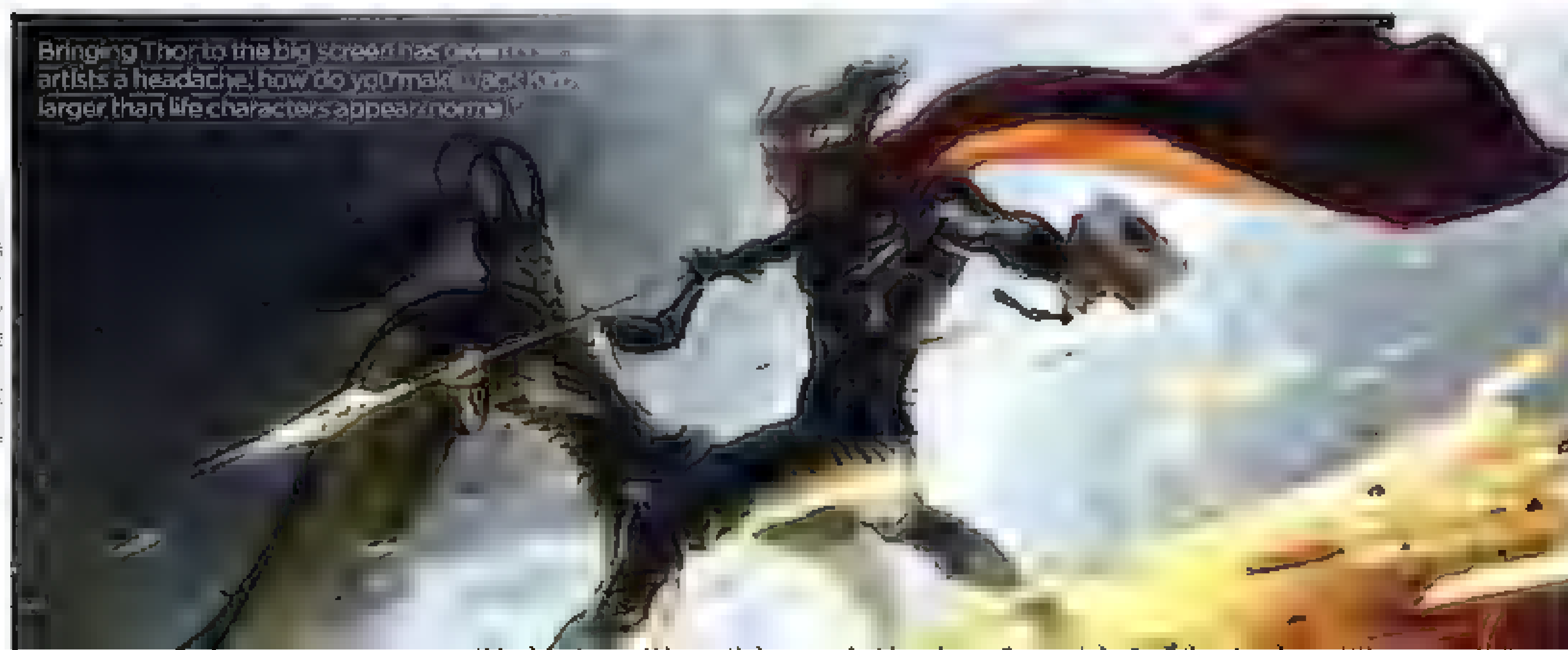


find thanks to the imminent film release. However, because the comic is still as relevant as ever, Captain America and The Green Lantern are certainly interesting characters. The parameters for concept artists were quite different.

For the film, we worked on the art for key moments in the film. It wasn't a very well-known book, so we were able to take a lot of liberties with the established world without



for key moments in the film. It wasn't a very well-known book, so we were able to take a lot of liberties with the established world without



Bringing Thor to the big screen has given artists a headache: how do you make a larger-than-life character appear normal?

VANCE KOVACS

He's been helping give Asgard its big-screen look and feel

What was your brief on Thor?

I went directly onto conceptualising Asgard sets, and chiefly Heimdall's Observatory, which doesn't appear in the comic. I also tackled the Rainbow bridge, Odin's throne, Odin's bed and the chamber of the Warriors Three, as well as a host of other things Asgard-related. The brief was to create timeless-looking modern spaces juxtaposed with Kirby-esque furnishings.

How did you approach bringing a comic to the big screen?

After pouring over many artistic takes on Thor, I liked Jack Kirby's the best, though I have to say Esad Ribic's Loki series came a close second. Kirby's carried a certain honesty and optimism that I liked. I was always convinced that bringing Thor to the big screen with no apologies was the way to go – winged helm, hammer and all.

What's important when turning a comic into a movie?

Embracing the source material and treating it as gospel is the way to go, but also bringing something new and fresh to the franchise. There's certainly enough in there to latch onto as an artist. The challenge for me is always the same: how do I appeal to the hardcore audience, the new adopter and myself as an artist?

What have you got coming up?

I'm working on concepts for Snow White and The Huntsman.



Vance has worked for more than 15 years as an illustrator, creative designer and concept artist for films and games.

www.vancekovacs.com

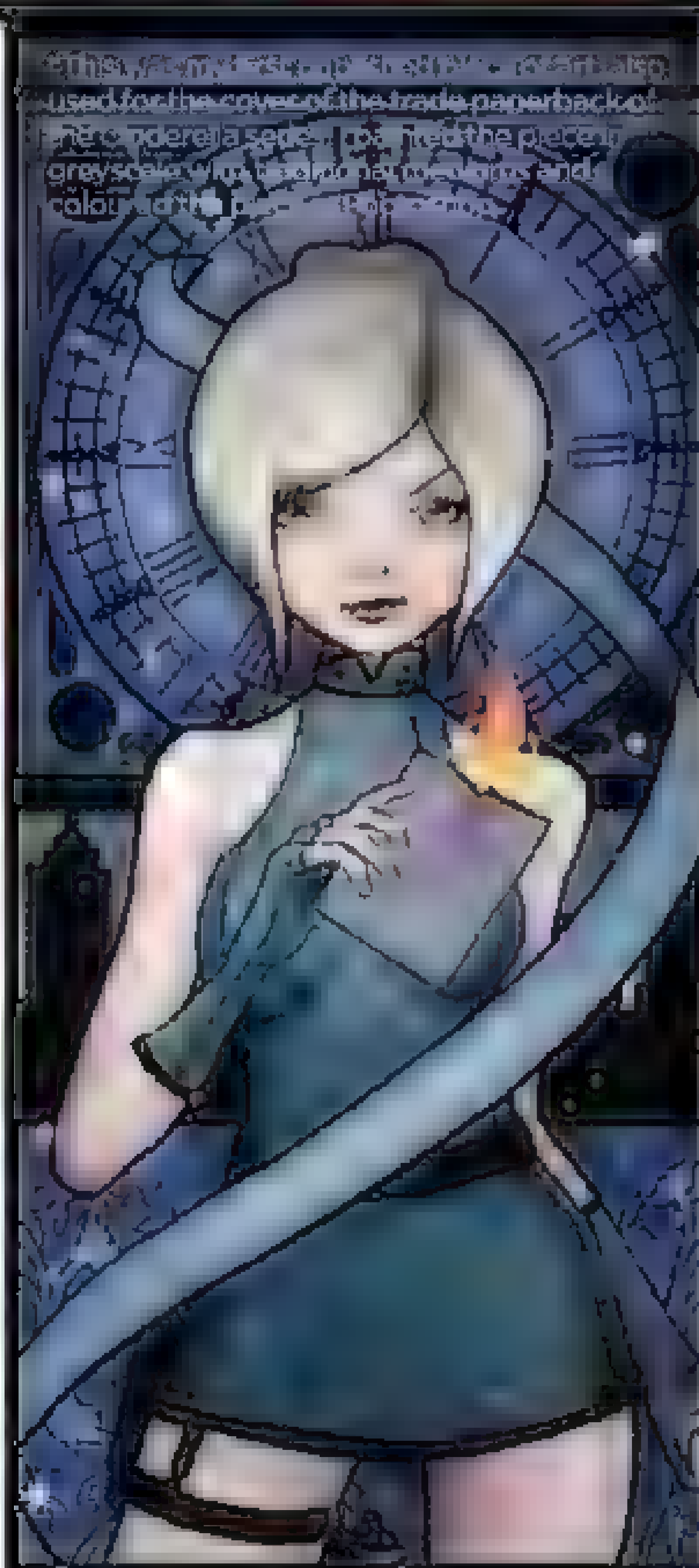
Continued from previous page...



Chris Evans plays Steve Rogers, the army reject who eventually becomes America's first super soldier

rising among the fan base. With other iconic comic book characters involved in such as the Iron Man suit, there was a lot of pressure to capture the iconic image of the character. The film-making process is a rough, evolving technical process, he says.

Adding to the making of the film, director Jon Favreau and producer Jon Davison, both of whom have worked on the film, represent the very, seriously. "You're doing a lot of time on the set, and the scene on the set is as much as the collective consciousness of the set," he says. "and so a lot of the design involved around what our 19th-century characters would look like was when they first appear. That gave us a lot of play with the design. We're doing a lot of setting up some of the things that think people are doing."



Cinderella story

Cover star We speak to the young artist who sees Cinderella as 007

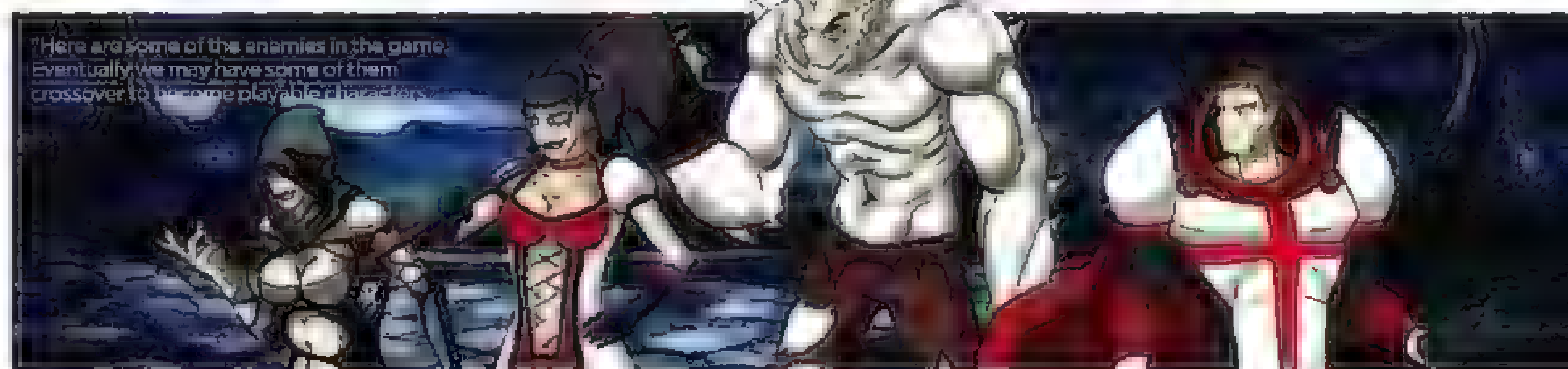
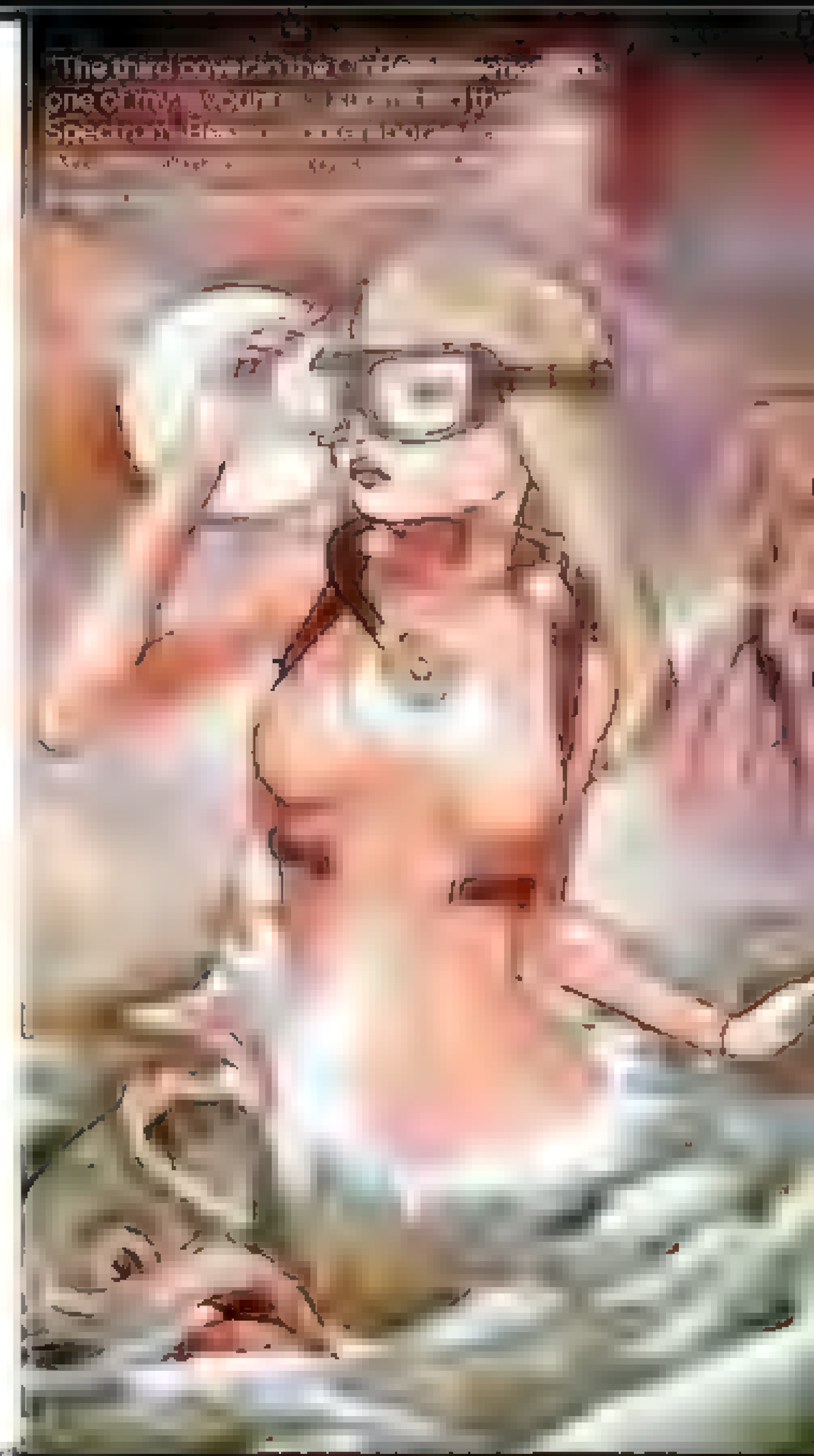
Straight out of college and a fan of Vertigo's *Fables* comic series, Chrissie Zullo entered DC's talent



search at San Diego Comic-Con and was soon asked to produce the cover for *Cinderella*, *Fables*'s spin-off series.

Chrissie was excited to have *Cinderella* to depict. "She's the James Bond of the fairy tale," she says, "so it was exciting to take her on her mission, not married to the main character."

Chrissie has since worked on other Vertigo titles, including *Madame X* and *Fables*. 100 hours. You can see more of her work over at chrissiez.blogspot.com



Next stop, art success

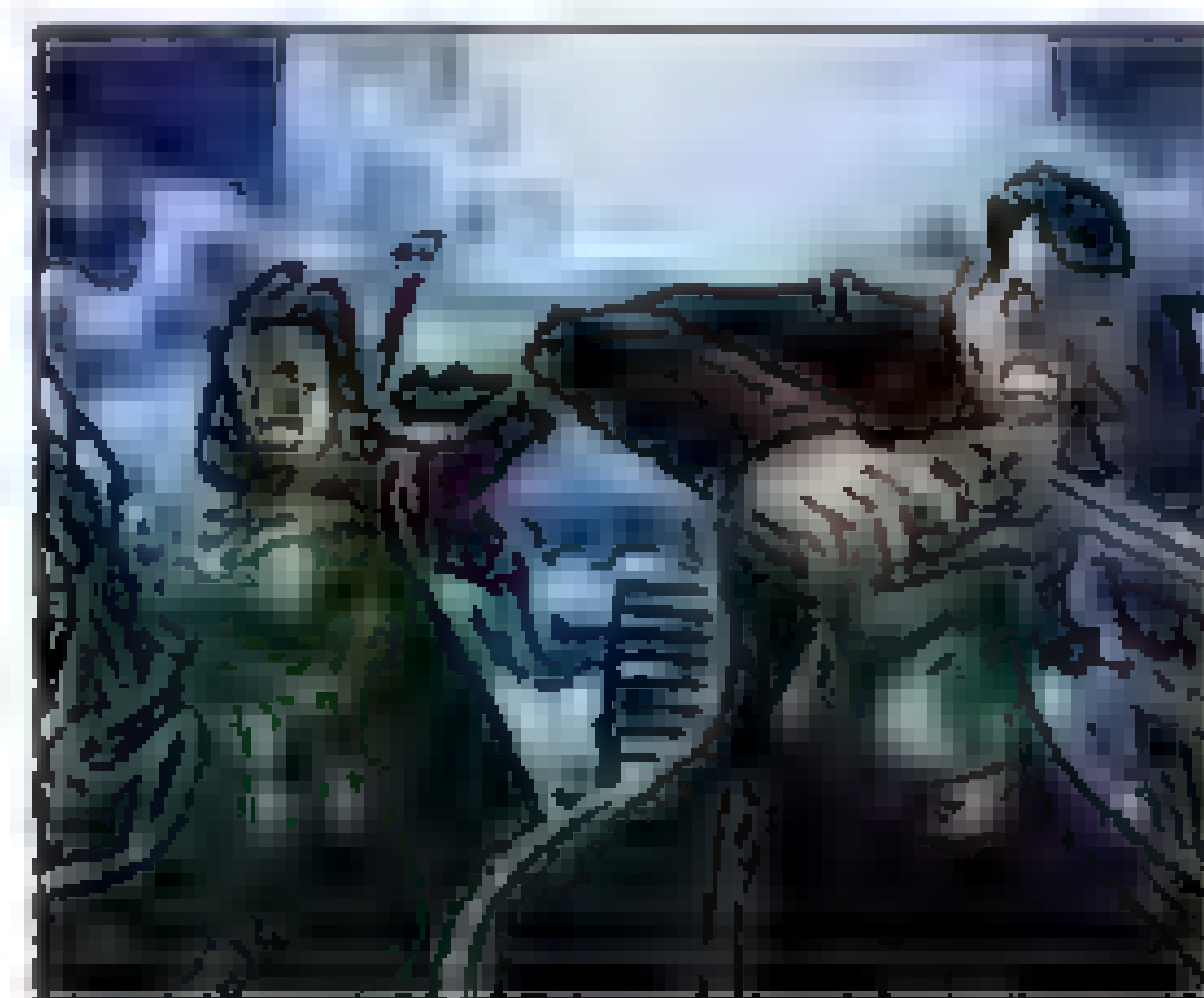
Inspiration Long-time ImagineFX reader James O'Reilly gives thanks as he finishes his first game project as art director

After a chance meeting with a fellow artist on a bus (see Letters in Issue 66), long-time ImagineFX reader James O'Reilly has just finished his first title for the Comic Book RPGs company.



Taking inspiration from Melane Deon's *Immortal* game, James produced *Immortal* as a vampire game with a lot of elements of *Exotic*, *Puzzle Quest*, and *Beowulf* in a fresh comic book style.

James produced *Immortal* as a vampire game with a lot of elements of *Exotic*, *Puzzle Quest*, and *Beowulf* in a fresh comic book style.



"John and Raven are the main characters," says James. "They're vampires fighting for different causes, but their paths are aligned."

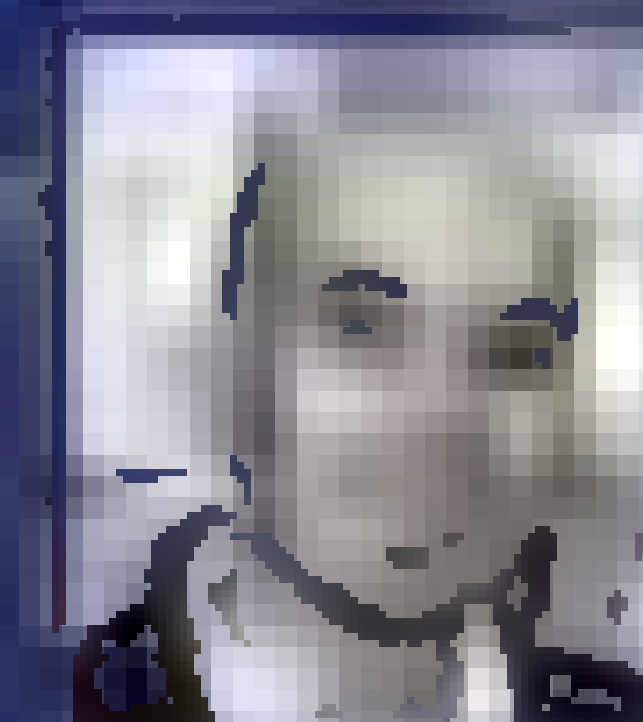
Resolving *ImagineFX* for three years has ingrained many ideas about conceptualizing characters, says James. Particular techniques that spring to mind are drawing many thumbnails, using a lot of references and refining them.

James is working on his illustration career, hopefully, with his drive and motivation meeting on public transport. It's a lot of work in the art world. You can see more of his art at www.comicbookrpgs.com

Great minds

Eight high-profile artists have set up a blog that's set to last

Dan Dos Santos created the Muddy Colours blog in mid-2010 with a popular credo in mind: success lies in numbers.



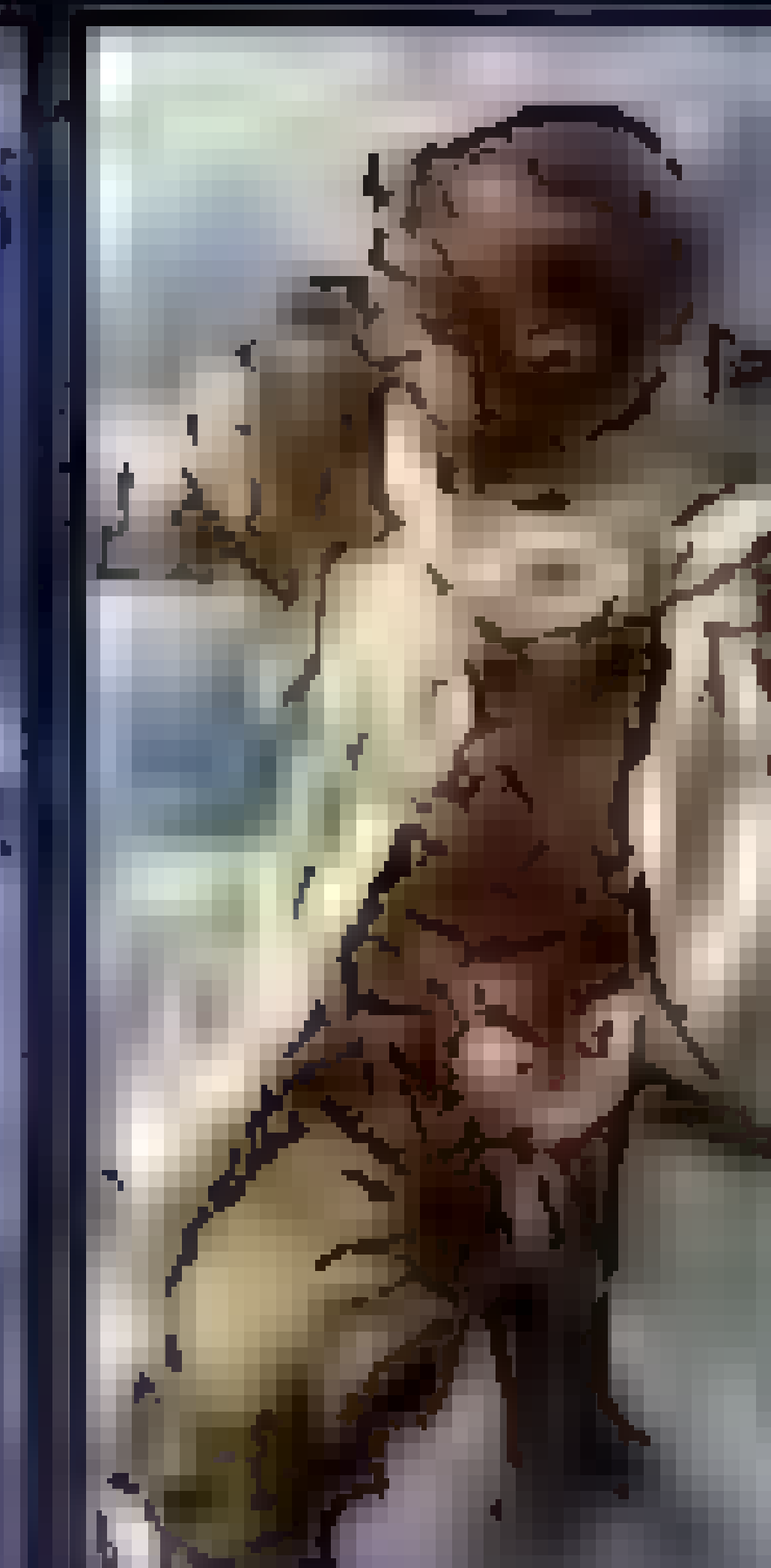
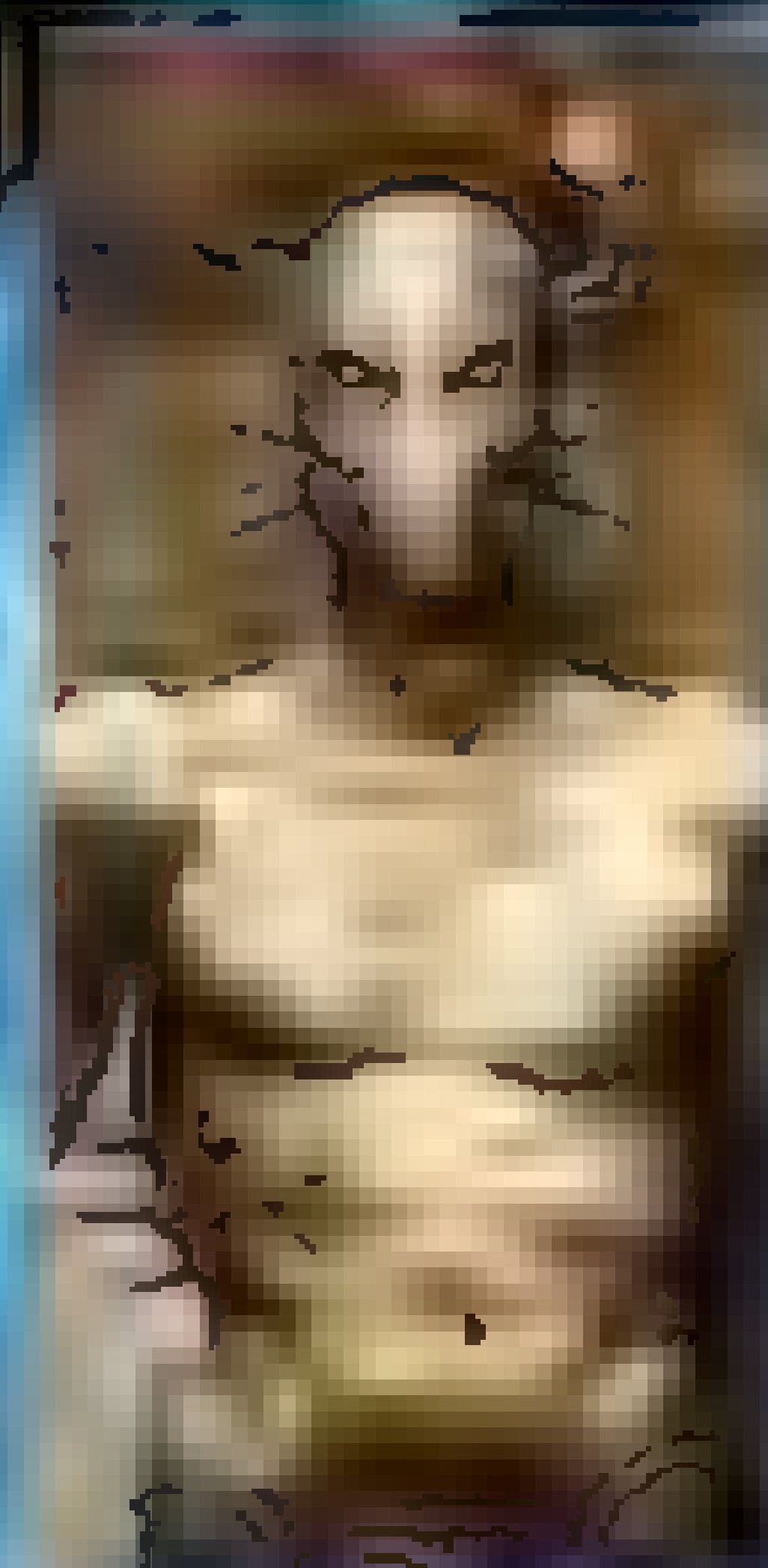
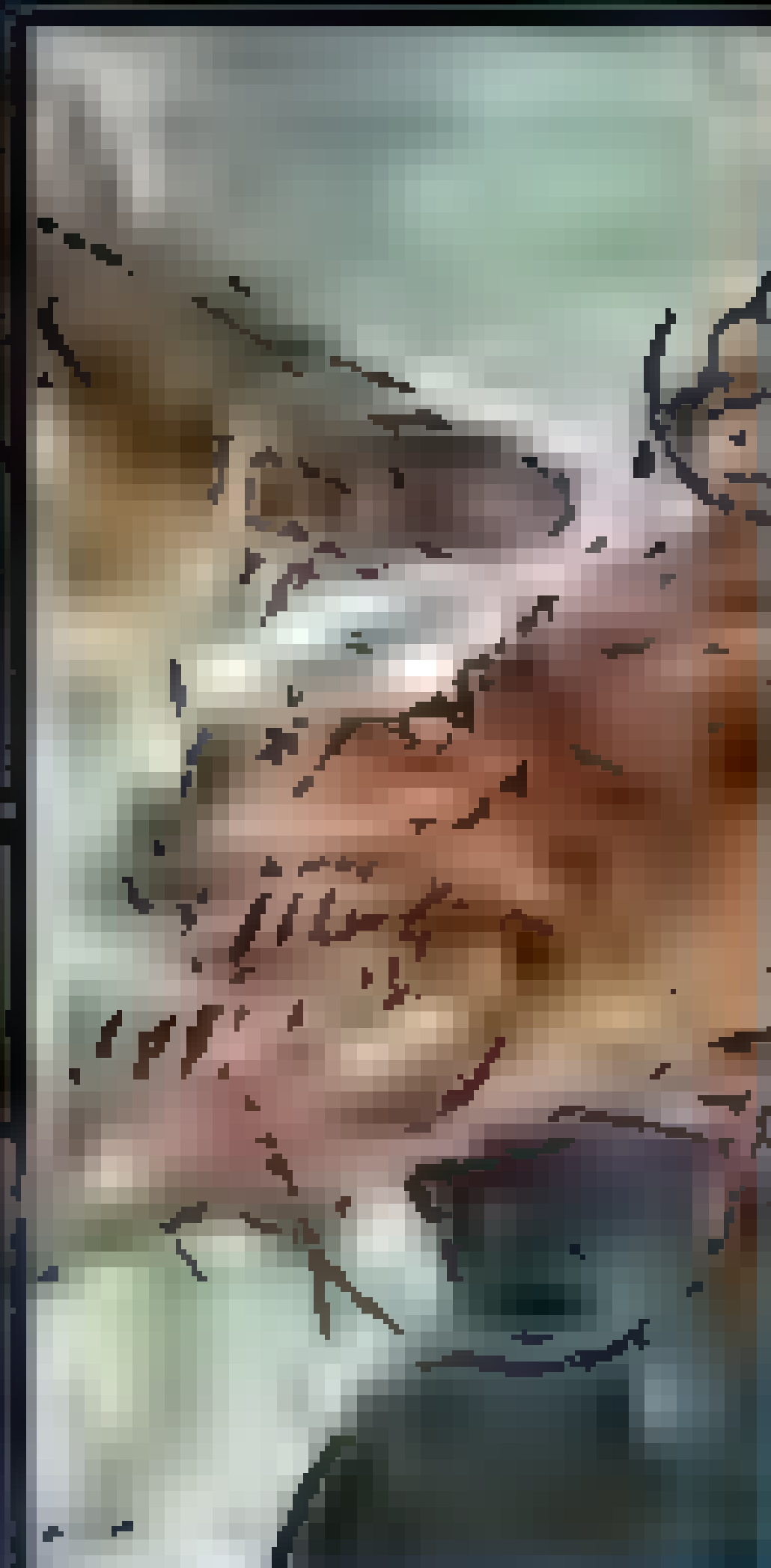
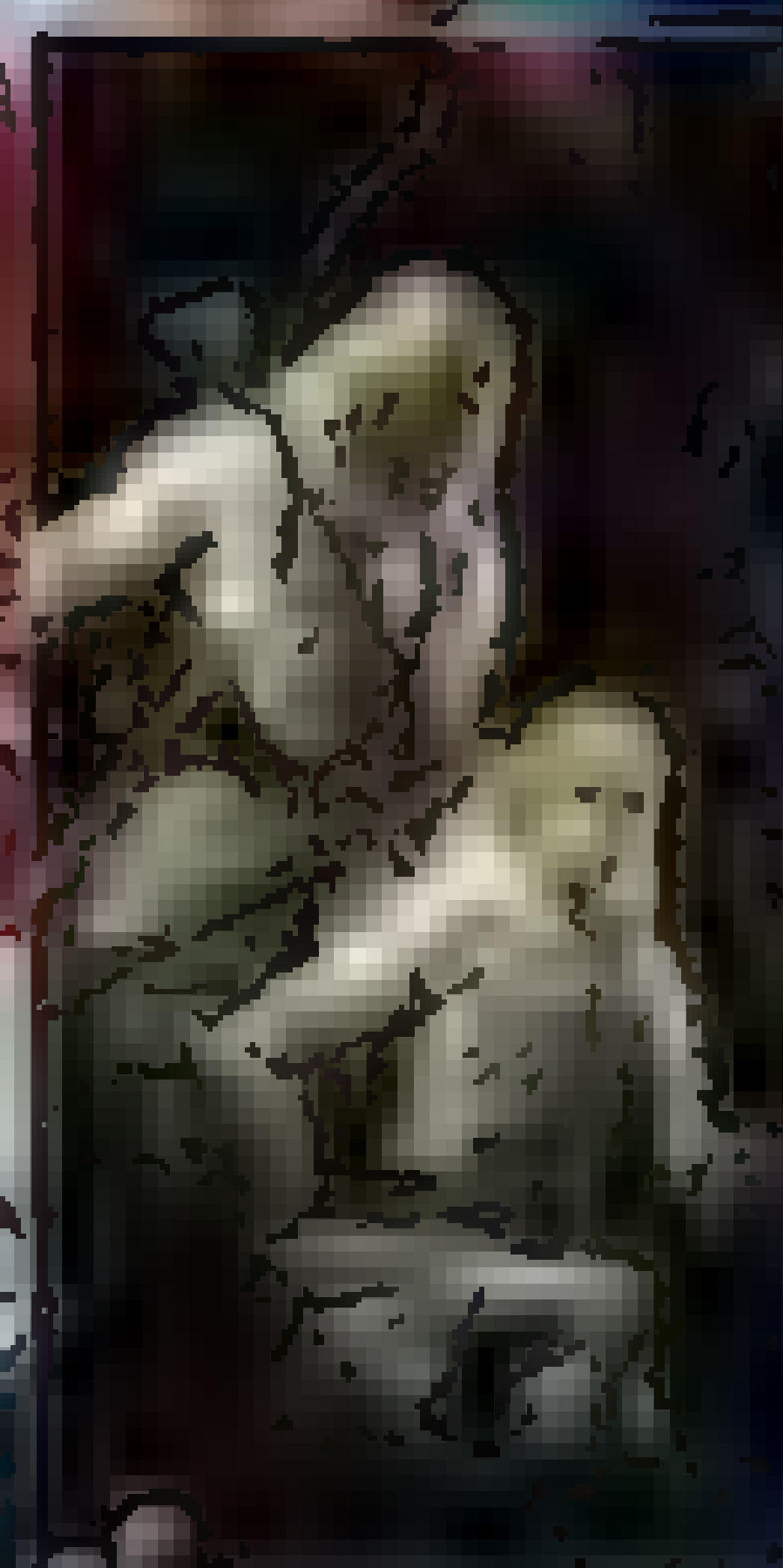
"I decided that doing a daily blog by myself just wasn't practical," says Dan, "so it became a group art blog." Even then, Dan was a little

weary of taking it further, because of the number of "group blogs out there that either don't focus on SFF art, or simply have too many members whose work is not of a professional level."

To make a popular blog, Dan was going to need some heavyweight help. "Convincing eight of the industry's most influential artists to partake is the hard part." But partake they have, and now Muddy Colours has the ongoing input of Eric Fortune, Frederik Elsing, Justin Gerard, Donato Giancola, Arnie Fenner, Jon Foster, Greg Manchess and John Jude Palencar, with plenty of guest artists mucking in, too.

Dan has a loose plan to keep the collective going for years, in one form or another. "After a year or so I expect some of the current artists will step aside to make way for a new member," says Dan. "Not only will this keep the current members from burning out, but it'll keep the audience interested as well. With dedicated members and a bit of luck, this blog will be around for a long time."

Follow the artists' work and writings at muddycolors.blogspot.com.



Dan Dos Santos didn't think his art alone was enough to carry a blog, so he enlisted the help of top artists, including (from left to right) Don-

ato Giancola, John Jude Palencar, Justin Gerard and Greg Manchess.



deviantART

+deviantWATCH

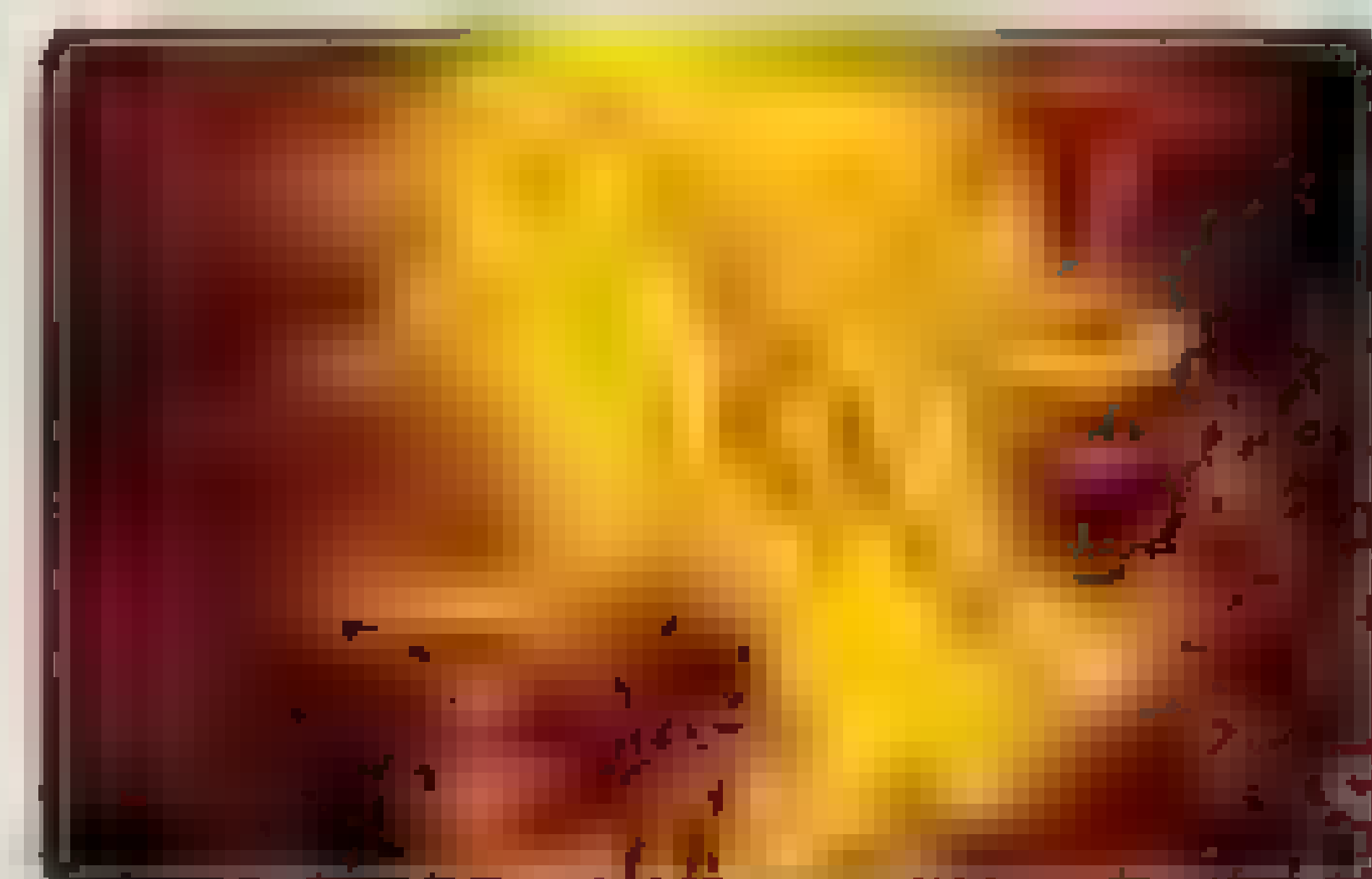
Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



Molly Libiao

molybdenumgp03.deviantart.com

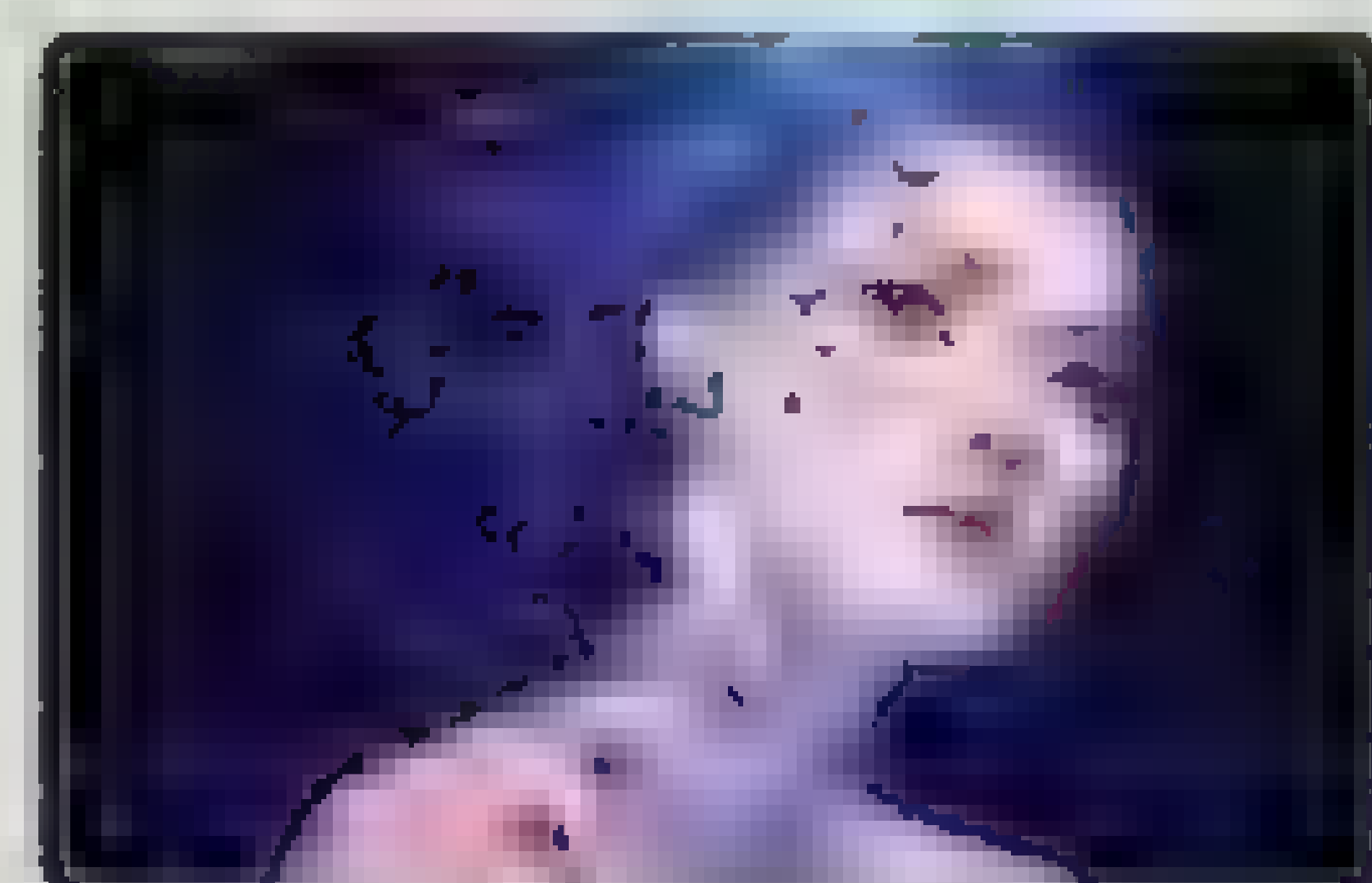
A distinct combination of saucy paintings with dramatic, panoramic fantasy landscapes, full of depth and complex colour. There's a great sense of fun, and you'll find comic film-inspired images with the artist's own twist alongside some dazzlingly original concepts.



Liiga Smilshkalne

liiga.deviantart.com

Liiga's art is all about using light and dark to create the perfect mood. There are caricatures and sweeping battle scenes, but they're all linked with a dramatic use of brooding tones and piercing, fiery light. And it's not often you see a penguin being given such attention.



Bao Pham

thienbao.deviantart.com

Bao's portraits are sublime, infusing stunning fantasy imagery with a colour palette straight from Odilon Redon pastels. There's beautiful still life sitting alongside bleeding, demented clowns, but it's all democratic – no high and low art distinctions – and it's a pleasure to look through.

These drawers contain artwork in various stages, from sketches through to final art. Find a safe place to store this stuff, because you never know when accidents might happen if the art is exposed.



Greg Staples

Lofty goals The 2000 AD artist gives us a guided tour of his attic-conversion studio



I always like a nice working environment, which to me means warm colours so that even on the greyest of days I still feel like I want

to work. I converted the loft in my house a few years ago and had a very specific idea about how I wanted it to be, and what equipment to put in there. Plenty of light coming through two skylights keeps natural daylight coming in, with blackout blinds if I need them for the computer.

My computer setup is a Mac Pro with a Cinema Display, an Intuos 4 graphics tablet, a MacBook Pro with 15 inch screen and a Wacom Cintiq 21K when painting on my computer. I really like the Intuos tablet but prefer drawing on the Cintiq because you get all the benefits of Photoshop and transform a drawing board into one. It wasn't cheap, but it's more than paid for itself and

I love to have it propped on a drawing board so it feels even more natural, but do be careful if you do this because I've already knocked it off once.

I like having quite a few pieces of art around me, and I've surrounded my studio to remind me to beat the standard and a good few books to inspire – though I prefer to have very few artist books around these days, because it tends to rub off. The ones I keep are often reference books and ones I can flick through while having a tea break.

My drawing board is where I do most of my painting and drawing – it's the space. Like the most, try to keep it in reasonable order because it drives me wild if I can't find a brush or pen or something. This is how my desk looked when I arrived this morning, so thought I'd show you it in its natural state. The board is a real treat for any artist because it has a built-in easel panel for

My Cintiq 21UX teetering on the edge of my drawing board. It's a great way to work, but be careful – I smashed my first Cintiq by not securing it properly



I keep this Boris Karloff painting of mine hung on the staircase to remind me of the standard I need to beat everyday. If there's something you're proud of then it's good practice to try to beat it with every piece you do

emboxer. I bought it from Ikea and with it I'm looking for a better, but I really like the idea of getting a better one. And they are not too expensive. Try to have good seating if you want to work. It's true, a good chair is an important one. I know a few artists with back problems from the wrong kind of chairs. One is a long, adjustable, but expensive. I can get the best you can afford

and try to have a little equipment you need only. You don't do a given job there's nothing worse than running out of paint in the middle of a painting.

I hope you can get a better chair. I'm sorry to hear that you're back to work. **Greg is an award-winning artist and illustrator from Yorkshire, England. You can see more of his art at www.gregstaples.co.uk**



My library features a selection of reference books. It's always handy to have a good collection if you've got enough room to store them

In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists



Painter Tutorial book

Secrets of Corel Painter Experts has been released, doing exactly what it says on the tin: providing several useful workshops from digital art experts for working in Painter. Have a look at a 28-page sampler here: www.imaginefx.com/paint.

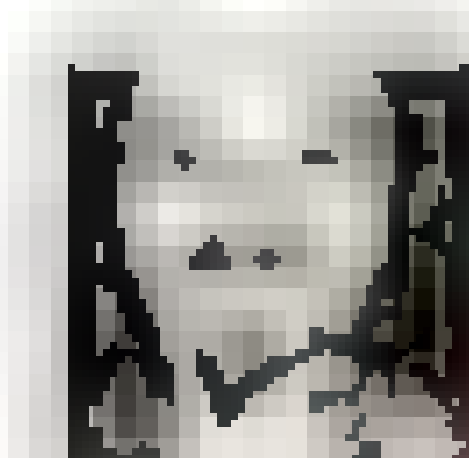
Book Atomhawk

Atomhawk Design presents the new book Art of Atomhawk:

Volume 1, out 10 March
It's a collection of images, sketches and works-in-progress from the concept art company's most successful projects, along with inspiring personal pieces from its artists. For more information visit www.shop.3dtotal.com.

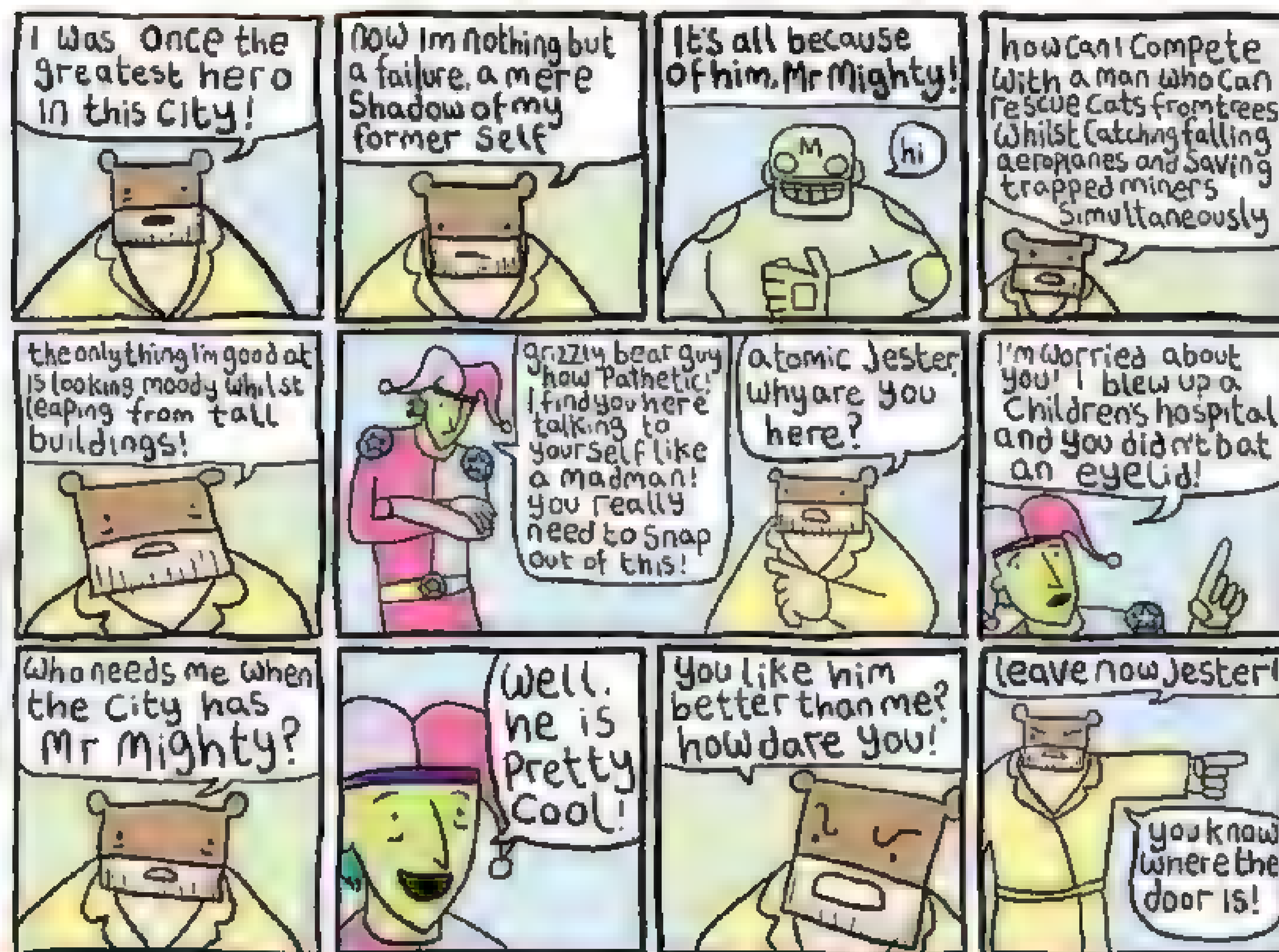
Comics Batman fan

Super-fan Aldrin Stoja has won the chance to star alongside Batman in Grant Morrison and Chris Burnham's new comic Batman Incorporated, after bidding £1,127 at the Comic Book Alliance's first fundraising event. More details here: www.comicbook.org.uk



Life Is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"What's not to love about a sleazy, undead, monster-fighting Mexican wrestler who gets a gig as a guardian angel?"

If you want someone to paint a comic of dull office life, don't knock on Dave Dunstan's door. See page 76

Attention class!

Learning British cartoonist David Lloyd heads up Cartoon Classroom website

David Lloyd, the comic artist behind V for Vendetta, is on a mission. Through the Cartoon Classroom, he hopes to bring the good word of cartoon art to the people.

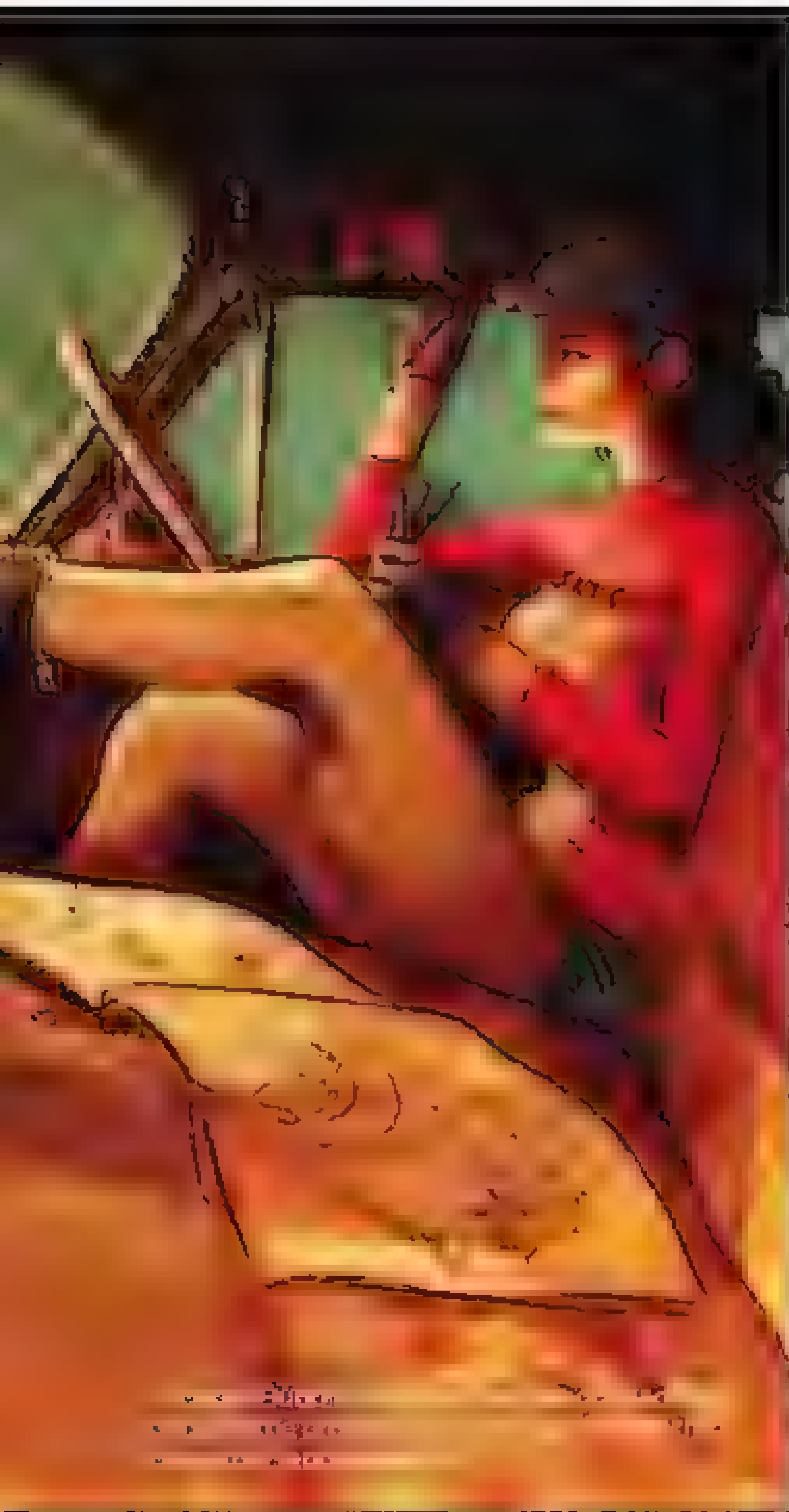
It's a website that aims to centralise information in the UK and abroad about the joys of cartooning and student art. That means the places to go to for advice, drawing tips, tutorials and links to art schools

and run cartoon workshops the world over. But this is much more than just a website. David Lloyd, with input from Steve Marshall and Paul Green, the site has made some inroads, but they're thinking bigger. We're looking for volunteers to contribute to help those in need by the cartooning that has beguiled this former cartoonist for decades.

To get involved contact cartoonclassroom@bt.com or visit www.cartoonclassroom.org



Cartoon Classroom aims to enable anyone to learn about the art form.



New stars of comic art

Winners Comic art competition unveils the artists of the future

The fifth annual Thought Bubble Sequential Art festival has unveiled the winners of its 2010 competition. First prize in the 18+ category was taken by Gavin Ross, with Sally Jane Thompson and Will Morris claiming second and third positions respectively.

Lisa Wood, a rising comic artist whose work appears in



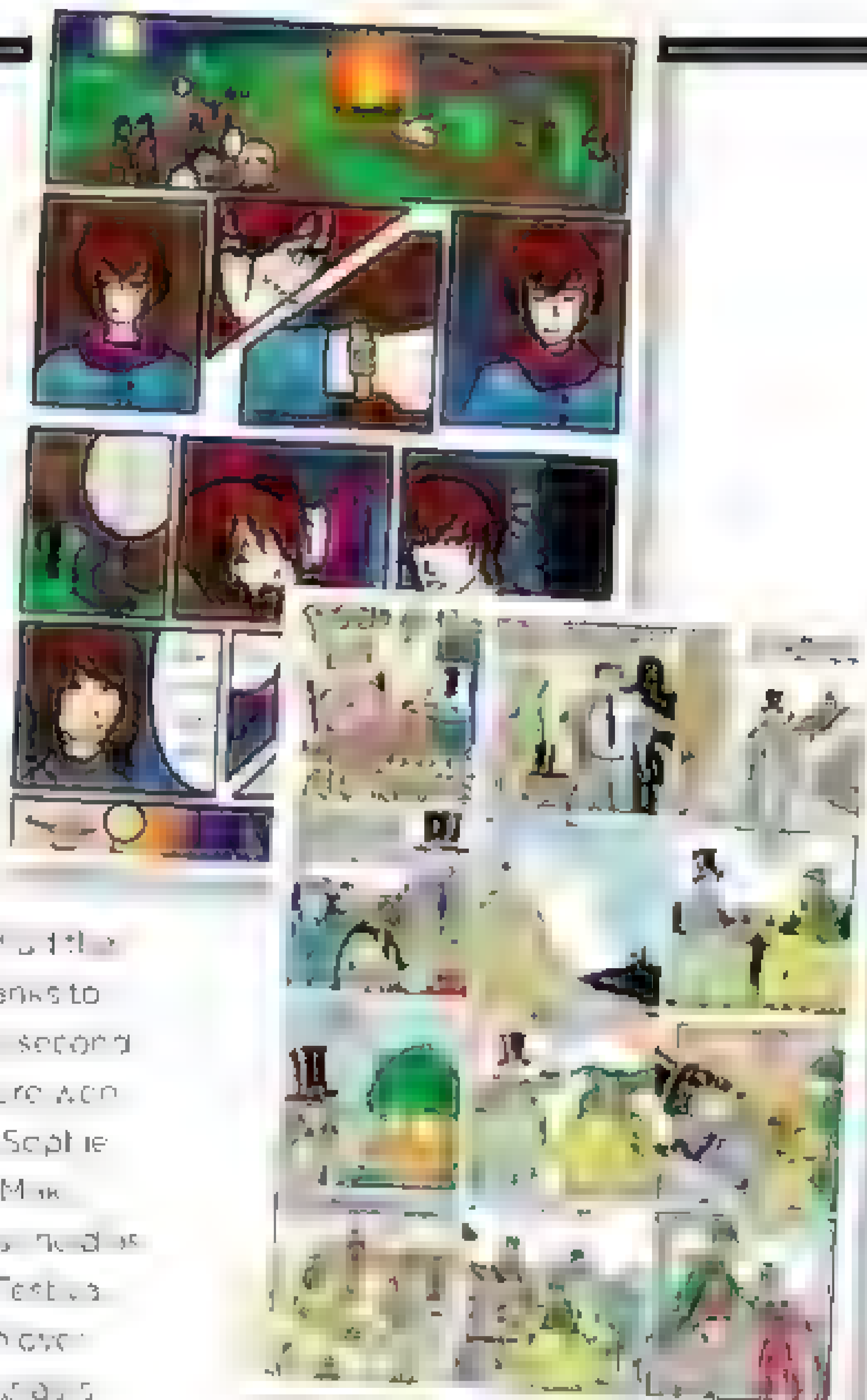
Elephantmen, runs Thought Bubble.

"I was blown away by the pages we received this year, they were so good," she says.

"I wish we could have given out more prizes, because definitely, they deserved them."

Taking first prize in Thought Bubble's category for 12- to 17-year-olds, Alice Summerscale is one to watch in comic art.

Techage artists also had the chance to compete thanks to the 217 entries. First, second and third prizes were won by Alice Summerscale, Sophie Kinnish and Raymond Mak respectively. The festival, held as part of the Leeds Film Festival, was well attended with over 4,000 fans and hundreds taking part. Watch for Thought Bubble 2011, which will be held in November. More details at thoughtbubblefestival.com



The overall winner in the 18+ category was Gavin Ross. Judges included Steve Wacker (Marvel), Matt Smith (2000 AD) and ImagineFX's editor Claire Howlett.



Kapow! socks SDCC

New con London gets major studio presence and global comic talent

Lucy Unwin is organising the Kapow! (9-10 April 2011) comic convention in London, claiming she wants to bring San Diego



Comic-Con to these shores. However, she's actually used another festival as inspiration. "I want it to be like Glastonbury festival," she says. "A place where you come and see the biggest acts in the world - a real event to remember."

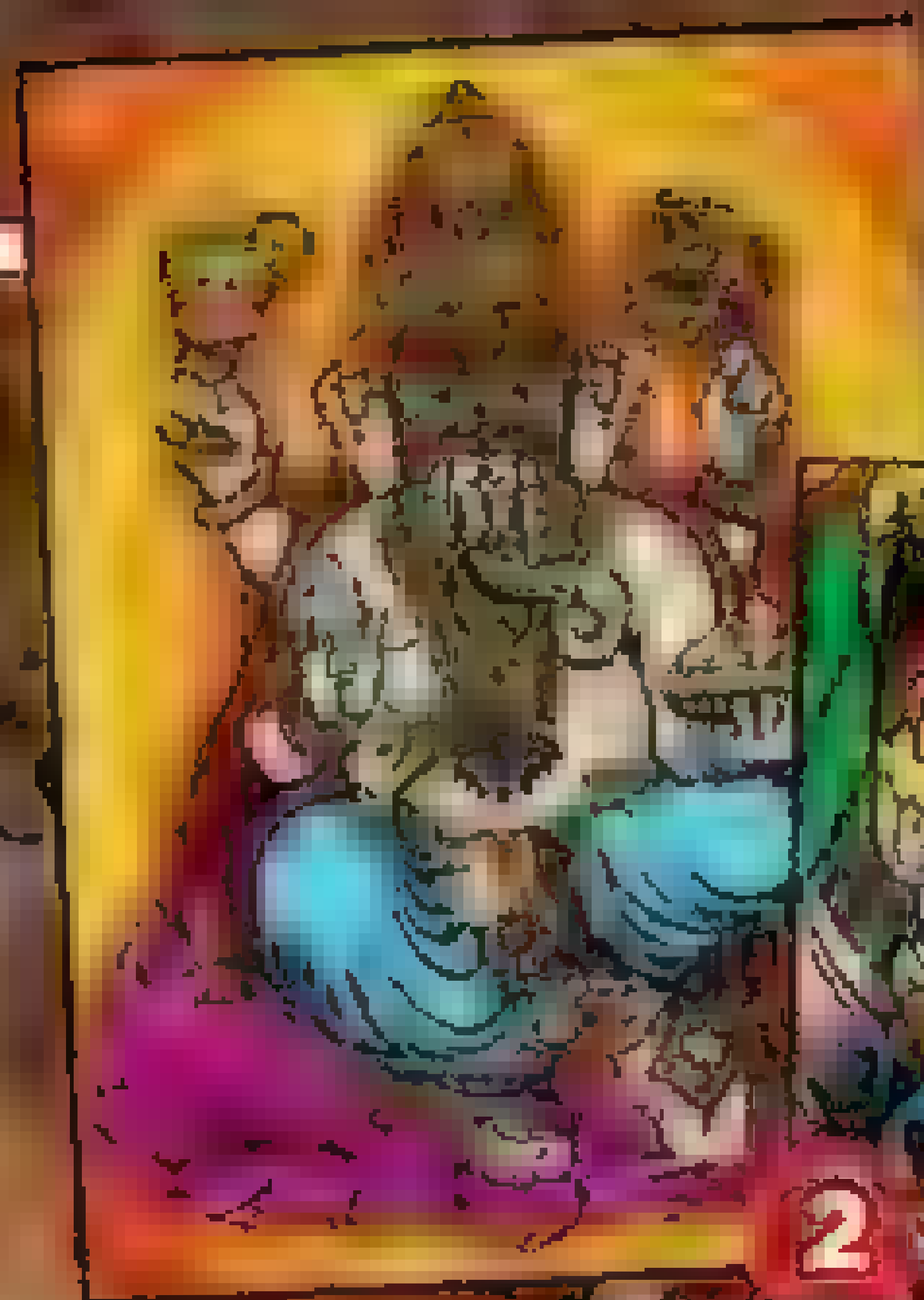
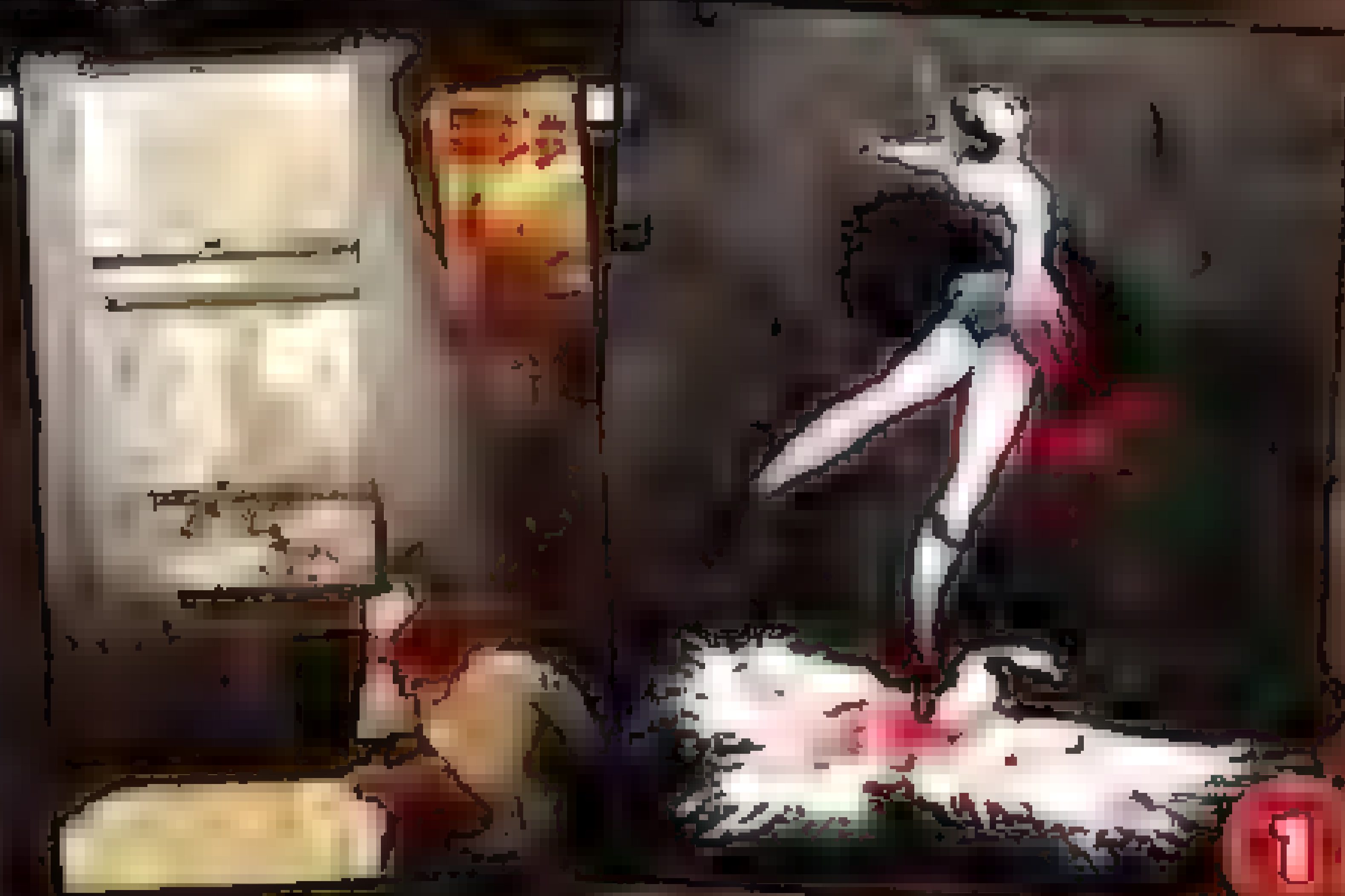
A though never seriously going to reach the size of SDCC, the Kapow! organisers are thinking big. "We don't want to necessarily be the biggest in London or Europe," says Lucy. "Having the biggest number of fans is our objective. We want to focus on the quality instead and keep it all as high-end as possible."

Kapow! will have previews of the biggest 2011 film releases, and TV shows a secret screening of a Hollywood superhero blockbuster that doesn't open in the UK until after the convention, as well as portfolio reviews with the UK and US publishers in the biggest franchises in the comics industry. "San Diego is the only other show where the studios have such a strong presence, so it seems a fair comparison," says Lucy.

See more here www.kapowcomiccon.com



Kick-Ass writer Mark Millar and All Star Superman artist Frank Quitely will both be in attendance at Kapow!, as will Cartoon Classroom's David Lloyd (see opposite page)



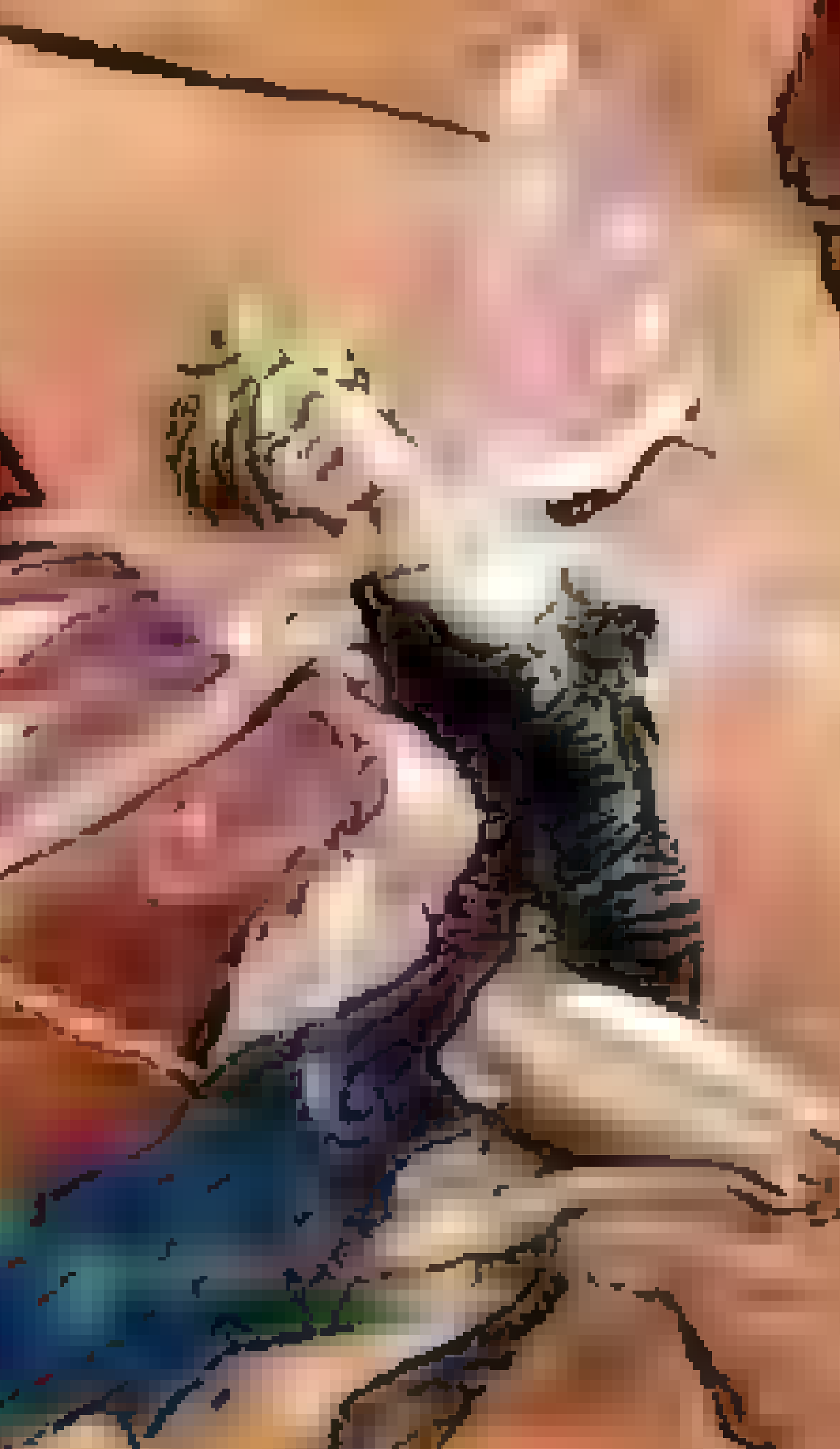
PLANET OF THE ARTS



HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF THE EVENTS AND ART BLOGS THAT HAVE GOT US IN A STIR THIS MONTH. IF YOU'VE GOT A STORY OR EVENT THAT SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, SEND US THE DETAILS: PLANET@IMAGINEFX.COM. CHEERS!

Beren

Beren Neale, Staff Writer



KIM HERBST

Illustrator, US

1 Fantasy and sci-fi concept art are two areas where Kim excels, with her new sci-fi illustrations for the sci-fi world of the future of publishing companies. www.kimherbst.com

CHRIS PARKS

Illustrator, US

2 Her new sci-fi book is a prequel to the first book in the series, 'The Pale Horse Design'. Chris Parks is a freelance artist and writer, with a focus on sci-fi and fantasy. www.palehorsesdesign.com

CAIO CACAU

Illustrator, Brazil

3 Home of Brazil's best digital comic art, the site is a treasure trove of comic art from around the world. Up to date with the latest images and a wealth of art on-pack. www.caiocacau.com

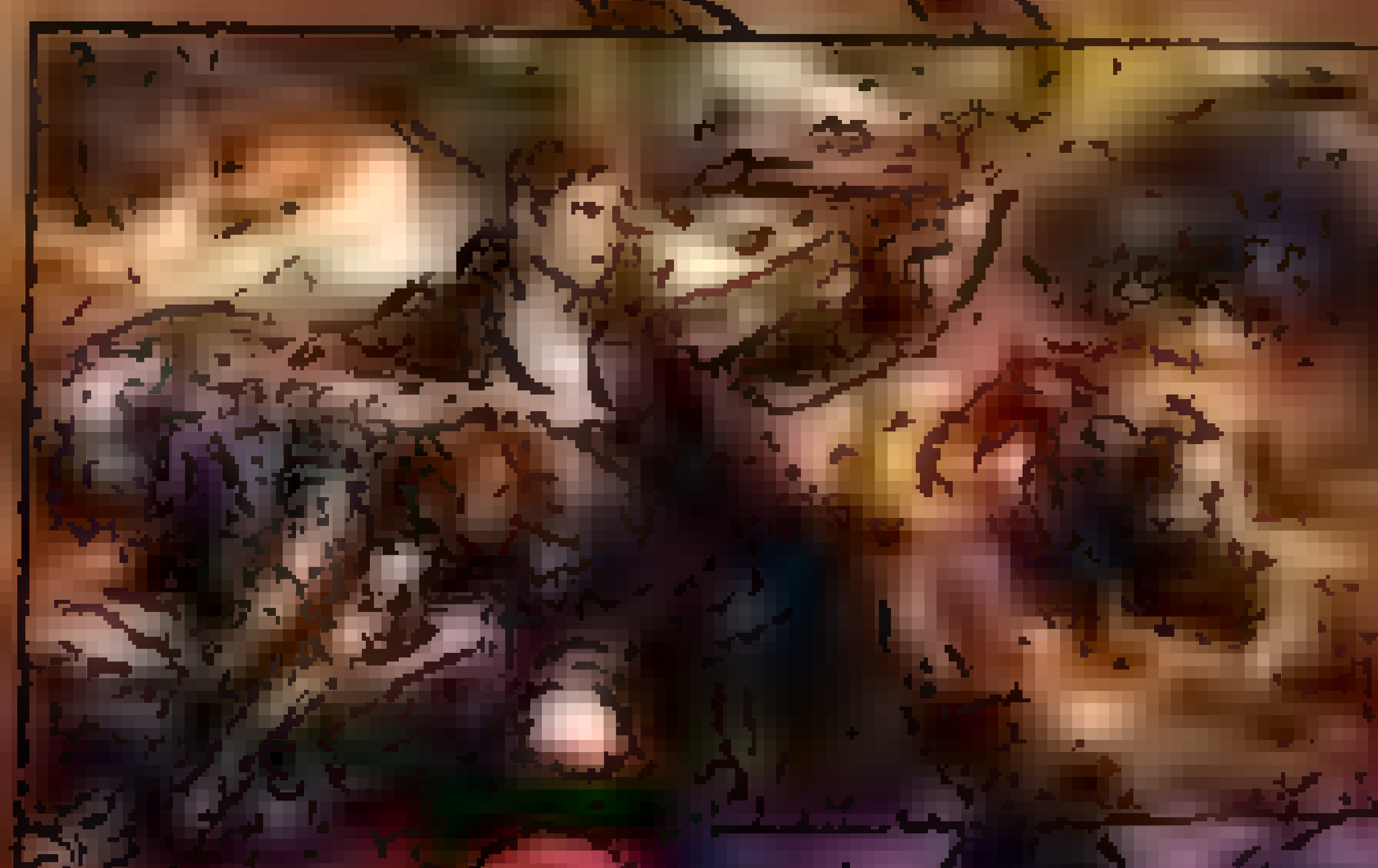
CARDIFF INT COMIC EXPO

26 February - Wales

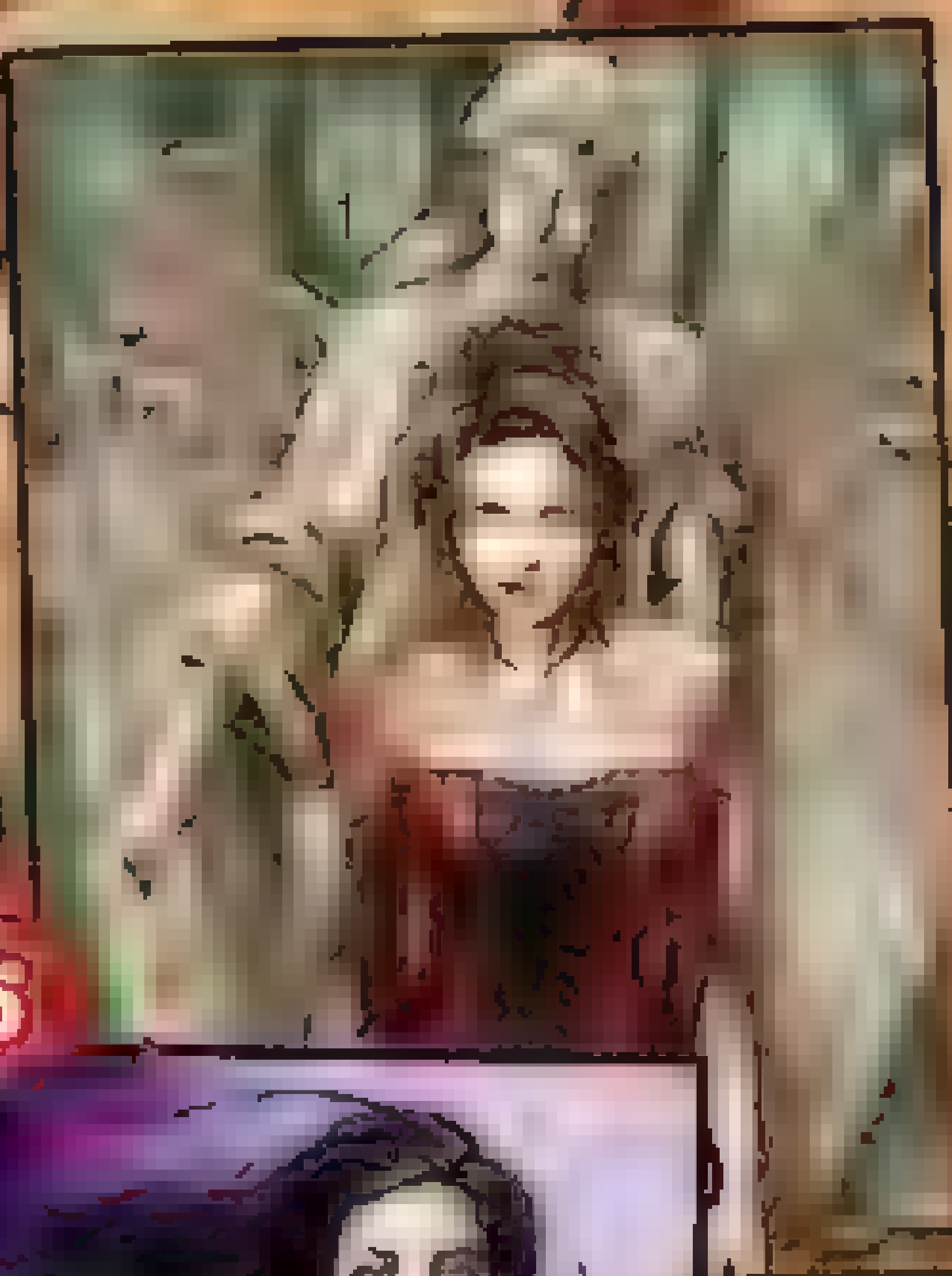
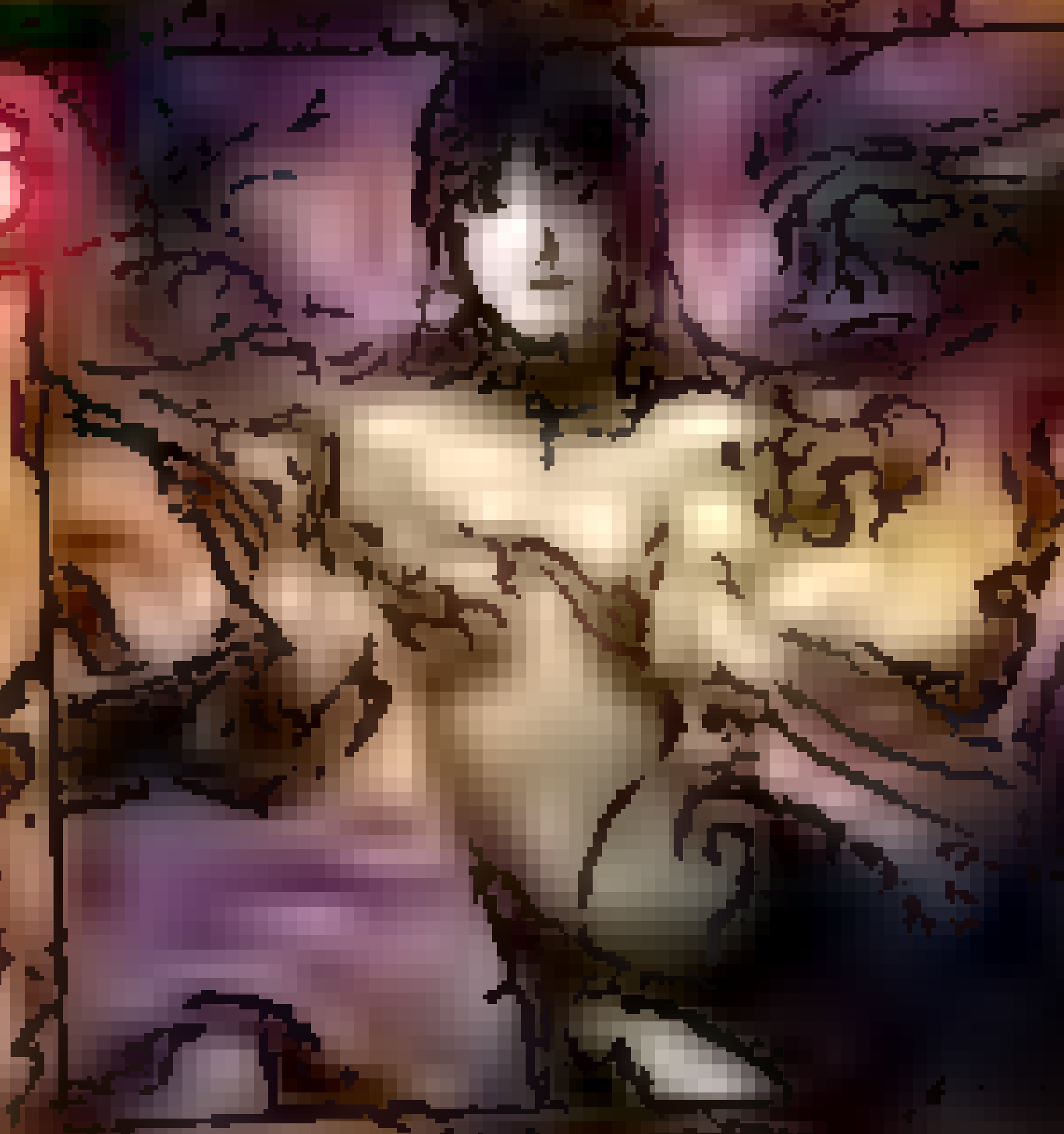
4 Held at the Mercure Hotel, Cardiff, the event is the first international comic expo. Many of the exhibits are from the 'Transformers', 'Batman', 'Doctor Who' and '2000 AD'. www.fantasyevents.org/cice



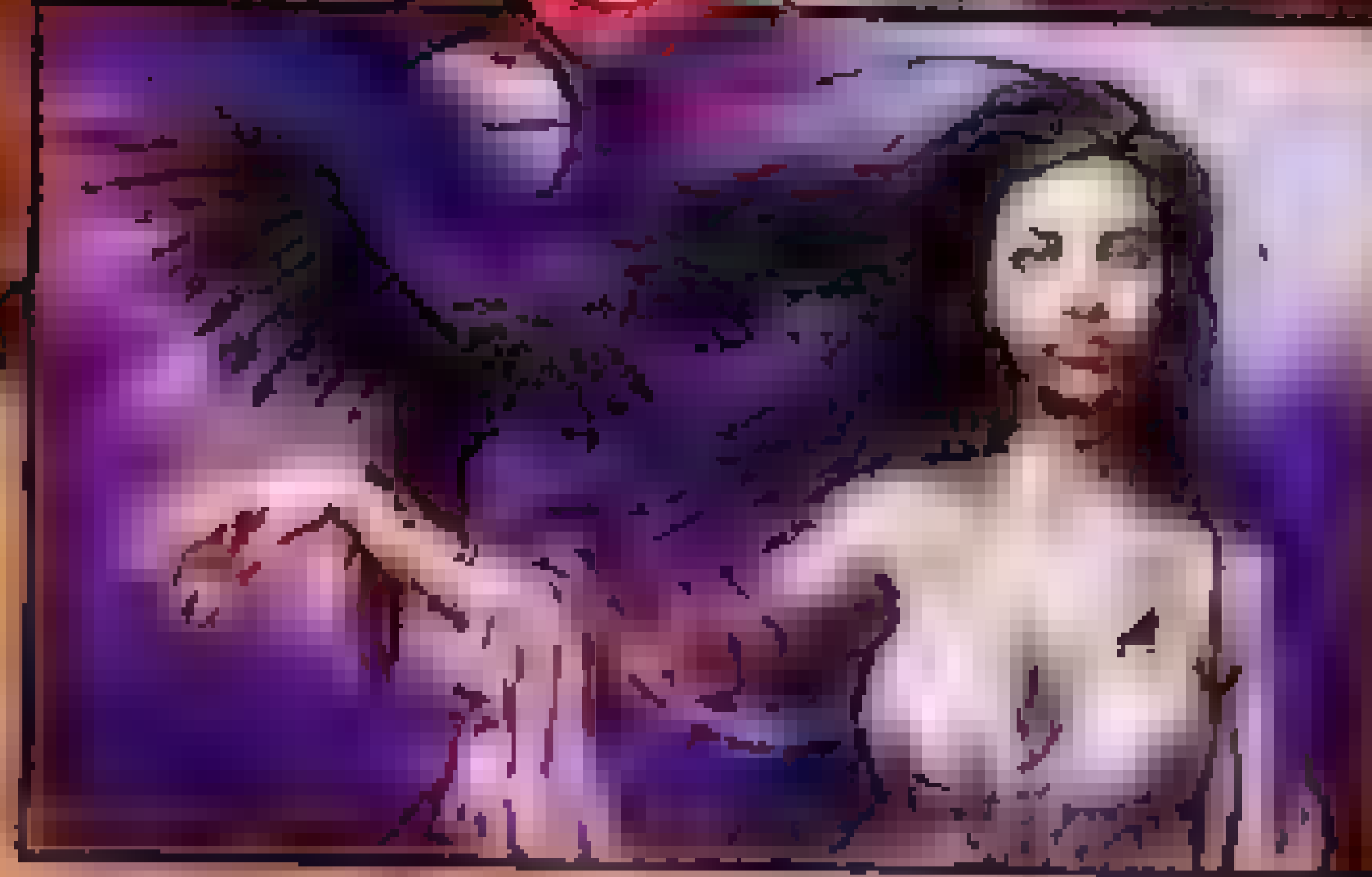
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5



CRIS ORTEGA

Illustrator / Japan

5 Fantasy illustrator Cris Ortega has a passion for drawing beautiful females and graceful felines. He also enjoys anime and manga. His interests don't stop there, he spends his free time discovering new and interesting things. You can discover his recent work at cris-ortega.blogspot.com

THITIPOT DICRUEN

Concept artist / Thailand

6 On top of concept art, Thitipot also works on digital painting and animation. But check out the character gallery, amazing stuff! www.xric7.com

SKETCH JAM

This Philippines-based group has been hooking up talented artists every month since July 2009



Drink and Draw Philippines

Michael Seludo/
Hideo Kojima's
round five offering

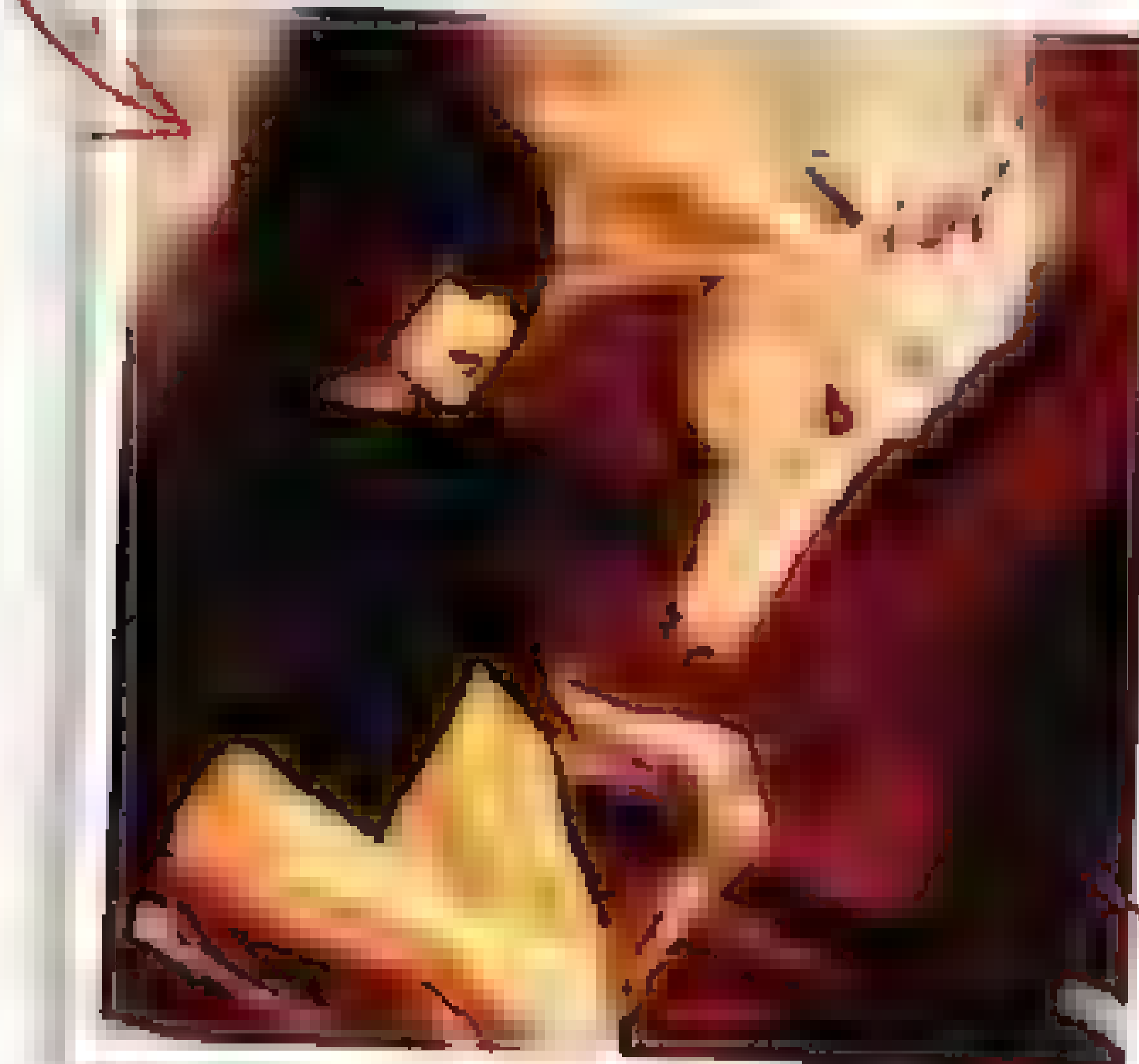
Michael Seludo's
images, based on just
and bad hair days.



Winners

Image of the month

WINNER The relationship between rider and horse is key to this image's success, says Norah Khor



"I painted this piece in Photoshop," says Norah. "I overlaid the base layer of simple shapes with some photos of concrete texture, then painted over them using my favourite custom texture brush and a default round brush."



Wolfie-chama, real name Norah Khor, worked hard to get the main characters just right. "It was important for the composition to show their close relationship," she says, "yet at the same time I used opposing body gestures to create a tension: Maeron's leaning backwards against Darphas, who's charging forwards."

This painting also benefits from a detailed narrative. "I like to develop the back story for each of my paintings to ponder upon as I work," she tells us. "Whether it be a simple portrait or a complicated illustration."

Magician

Norah Khor (Wolfie-chama)

GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/wolfie



"There's great movement and power to these characters that make this a deserved winner."



Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/myfx

MYFX THEME: Mechanotaur

WINNER: Euan Mactavish (em...)

GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/em



"I wanted to create something that looked semi-historically feasible, and so most of the inspiration on style and colours came from ancient Minoan art. There's a bit of Ray Harryhausen in there, too."

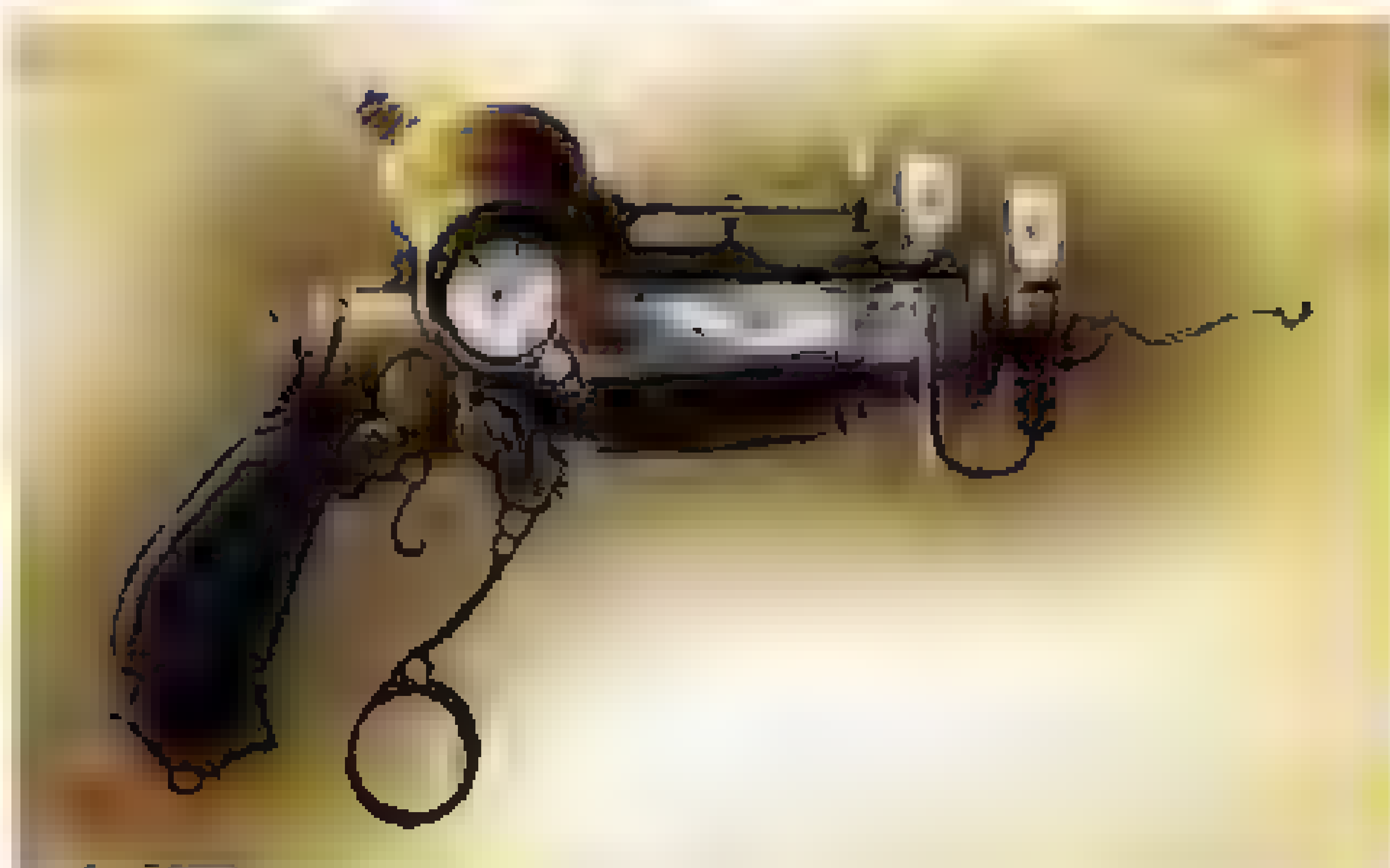
ISFX THEME: Spriteweed

WINNER: Ste Flack (steFlack)

GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/ste



"The spriteweed attracts its victims with its glowing flowers before slowly devouring them. I wanted to contrast the bright flowers and the girl, and the dark, creepy environment."



MYFX THEME: Steampunk Gun Concept

WINNER: Zachery Piper (Vampura)

GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/vampura



"This was my first attempt at the steampunk genre, and I'd never designed a gun before, so there were many challenges to overcome. My favourite part would have to be the glass window on the side because I really enjoy making things look functional, which I hope I achieved."

ISFX THEME: Swamp Grut

WINNER: Christian Schwager (schwager)

GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/schwager



"Grant rats and goblins: a topic after my own heart, although I only managed to join in at the last minute. Naturally, I was rather surprised (and pretty thrilled) to be voted the winner among such a great number of awesome entries"

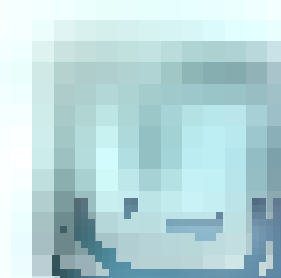


Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK



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www.twitter.com/imaginefx



Tell us your thoughts on :
www.facebook.com/imaginefx



Our EcoDisc DVD should work in all computer drives.

Eco-crisis averted

I've only been reading ImagineFX for a few months and it's already become my first magazine subscription. The disc was the real hook: workshops, videos, textures and, best of all, anatomy poses. But when I put the disc into my computer drive the disc wouldn't play. I tried another disc... same result. Did the design of the EcoDisc render the issues CD unusable? I decided to try the computers at my university and the disc worked! After copying the contents to my portable hard drive I was able to view them on my computer. Crisis averted.

Marcus Stockley, via email

Claire replies Hello Marcus, the older versions of EcoDisc had issues with some disc readers, but EcoDisc assure us that this newer version works in every machine and disc reader. I've forwarded your email to our disc support team, and advise anyone else having issues with their disc to email our support team directly at support@futurenet.co.uk

Plastic fantastic

I never realised the joy a plastic envelope could bring. You see, I've



We've still got a few copies, but hurry! Turn to page 88 and order one today.

One Icelandic reader is pleased that issue 64 came in a plastic bag.



bought the last 20 or so issues of ImagineFX from my local bookstore. In a way I've always felt left out, though, because of the different covers on the subscribers' editions. But enter issue 64 with a wonderful, caring, plastic casing and a cover underneath, devoid of attention-grabbing lettering made to draw in prospective buyers – all that was kept on the plastic. Even though the magazine inside is the same, I feel that this issue is more 'mine, and mine alone' than any of the past ones.

I suspect it's likely that this won't be a regular occurrence but there's one happy Icelandic who'd like it to be so.

Guðmundur Valur, Iceland

Claire replies Hello Guðmundur, we were pretty happy with our D&D issue too. Dan Scott's cover art is so good we were glad not to compromise it with cover lines. The free calendar was ace as well!

Reigniting skills

Thanks to your magazine, I've become hooked on trying to reignite some long-dormant art skills. Like so many others, I've been drawing pretty much since I was able to hold a pencil. I even studied computer graphics/multimedia, but I ended up in a web development position, where my art skills were neither prized nor used for the better part of 10 years.

This last year, however, you brought ArtRage to my attention. In school, I was a fan of Fractal Design Painter, and one of the few students in class who enjoyed using a tablet to draw directly into the computer, so the idea of a more affordable app in that vein intrigued me. Then you started putting in some articles specifically for ArtRage, and I eventually installed the program.

At first, it was hard to break out of the Photoshop mindset, but your articles on ArtRage have been inspiring, so much so, that I shelled out the \$80 to buy it. Hopefully, I'll start posting some work to the forums, but in the meantime I wanted you to know there's one more reader out there who appreciates the work you've done to bring such instructive, inspirational articles to light.

Jason M Batchelor, via email

Claire replies It's so great to hear that we've inspired you to pick up your pencil to start creating again, Jason – and that we can tell you about brilliant art packages like ArtRage. Thanks so much for writing in.



Update
STAR LETTER

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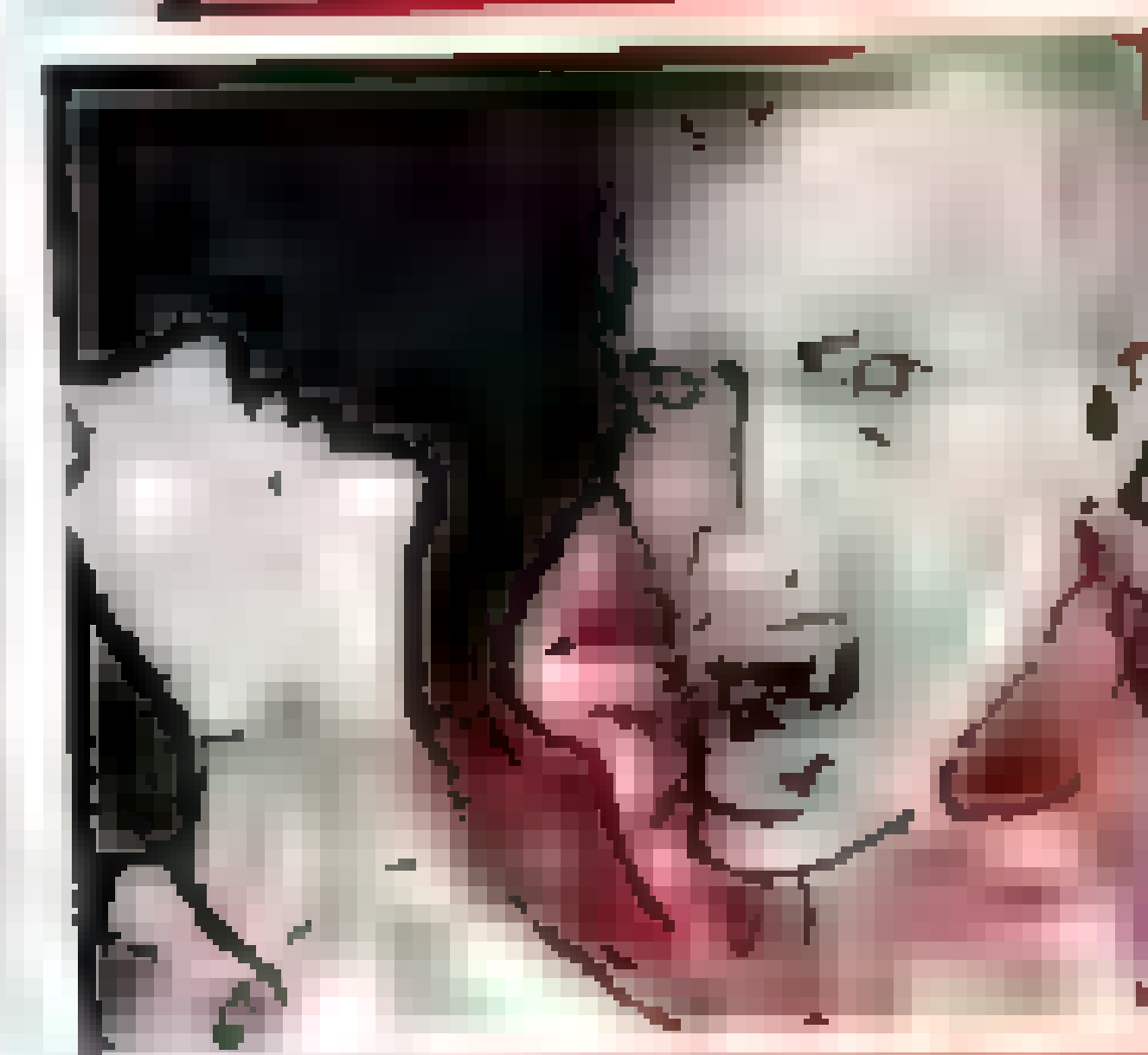
A bundle of joy

About three years ago I became intrigued by this new digital art medium and started reading up on it, drawing such figures as Pain with my mouse (Donny (8th Birthday)) received a small Genius tablet and loaded Photoshop on my computer. It was like learning to draw all over again. I struggled to find good tutorials online and was becoming discouraged. One day I went to a bookstore and came across the *ImagineFX Fantasy Workshop* book. It gave me new inspiration and I began to take my digital art to new levels.

The first *ImagineFX* magazine I saw was the 50th issue and I haven't skipped one since. Your magazine is my little bundle of joy that I collect every month. It's filled with inspirational artwork, helpful resources and informative tutorials from great artists which can't be found anywhere else. I've only been buying the magazine for almost a year and the progress in my work is significant! I want to thank you for that because I now know that I've found my passion.

Gabby Correia, South Africa

Claire replies Thanks so much for your kind comments and for sending in your "before and after" *ImagineFX* images, Gabby! Your Ronaldinho painting is simply superb!



Gabby's art has come on in leaps and bounds with just a little help from ImagineFX.

HOW TO DRAW AND PAINT

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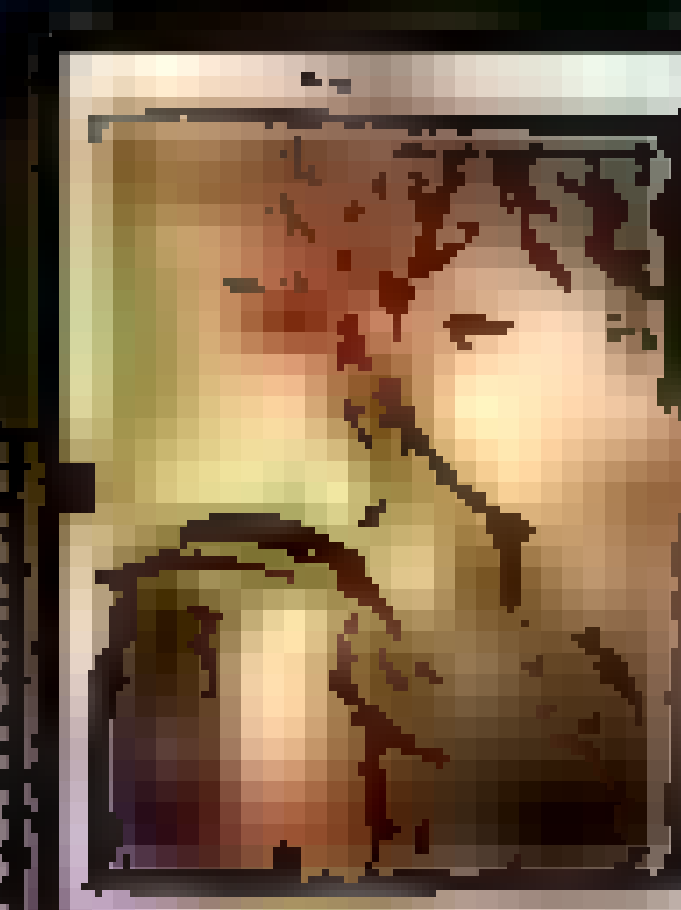
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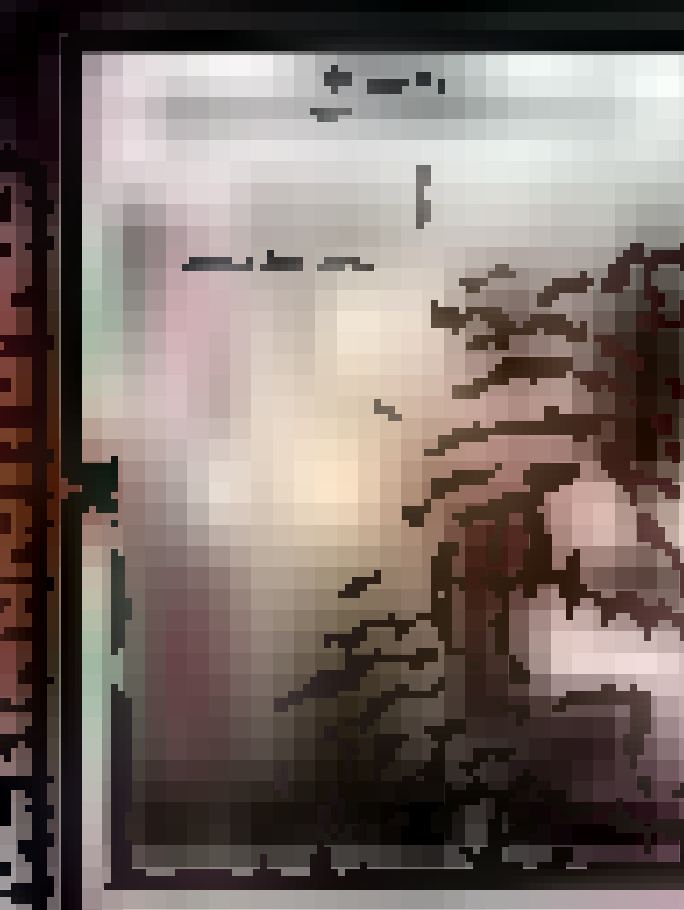
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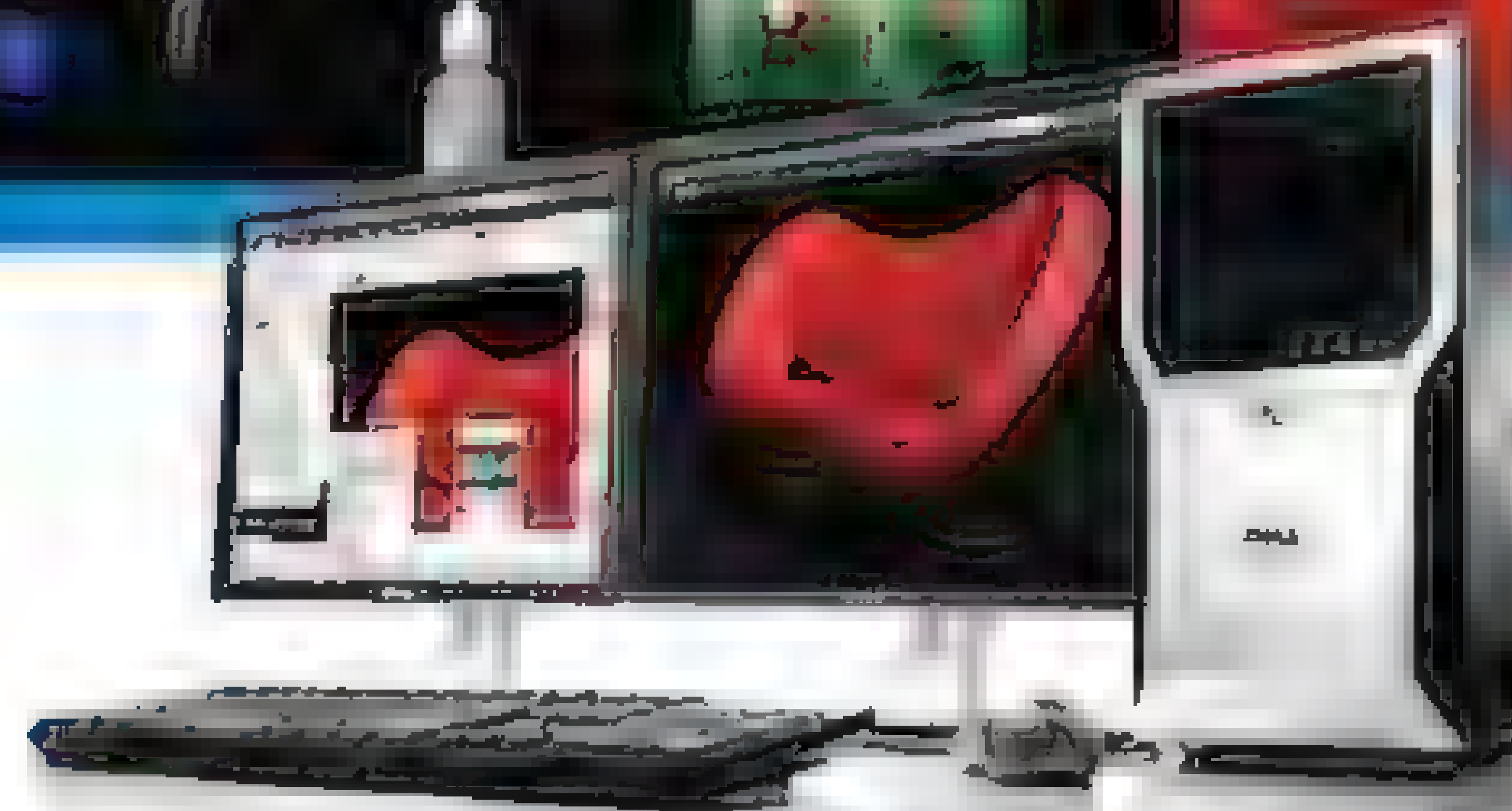
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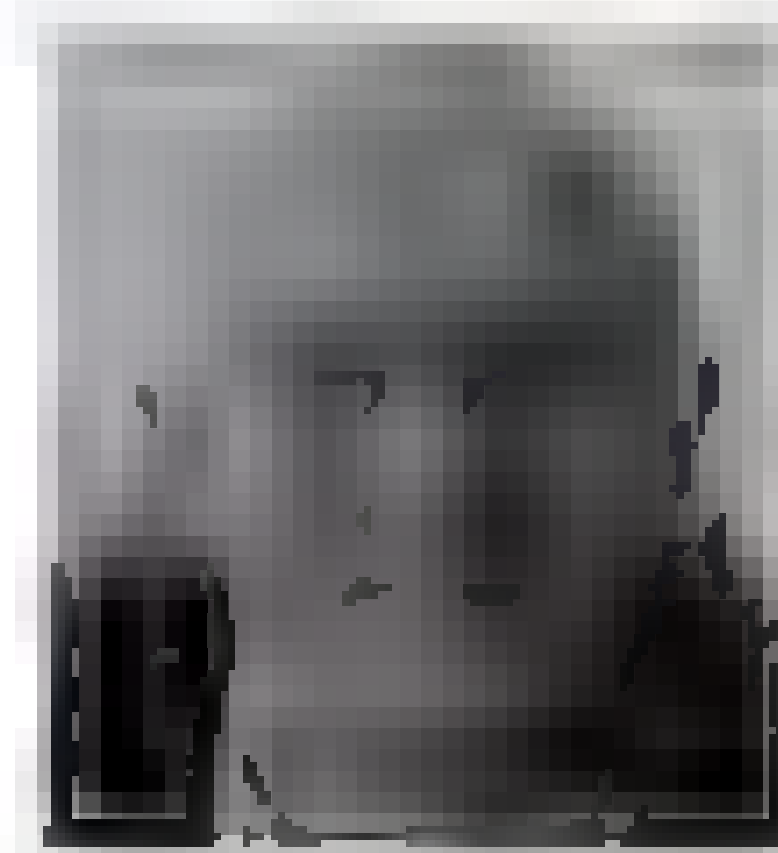


Artists' opinions



"ImagineFX is the best published source of conceptual art information that I have ever seen. The magazine is a must-have investment for any aspiring concept artist who wants to take their skills to the next level."

Andrew Jones, concept artist, Massive Black Inc



"ImagineFX is a unique resource for the science-fiction and fantasy community. It has invaluable tips and techniques for a range of software, and encourages aspiring artists to get their work in print and receive international exposure."

Jonny Duddle, freelance artist

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Artist Q&A

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Melanie Delon



Melanie is a freelance fantasy illustrator. She works as a cover artist for several publishing houses and on her personal artbook series.

www.melaniedelon.com

Lauren K Cannon



Lauren is a freelance fantasy artist who specialises in the surreal. She lives in a small woodland village in New Jersey, US.

www.navate.com

Cynthia Sheppard



Cynthia is a freelance digital artist. With a background in traditional painting, she likes to bring classical techniques to her work on digital canvas.

www.sheppard-arts.com

Nick Harris



Gloucestershire-based Nick went digital in 2000 after 18 years' working with traditional methods. He works mainly on children's illustrations.

www.nickillus.com

Brynn Metheney



Brynn was raised in the Mojave desert and moved to the Bay Area in 2006. Creature and animal illustrations are her forte.

www.brynnart.com

Remko Troost



Born in Amsterdam, Remko is a senior concept artist and illustrator with several years' experience in the film and video game industries.

www.remkotroost.com

Jonathan Standing



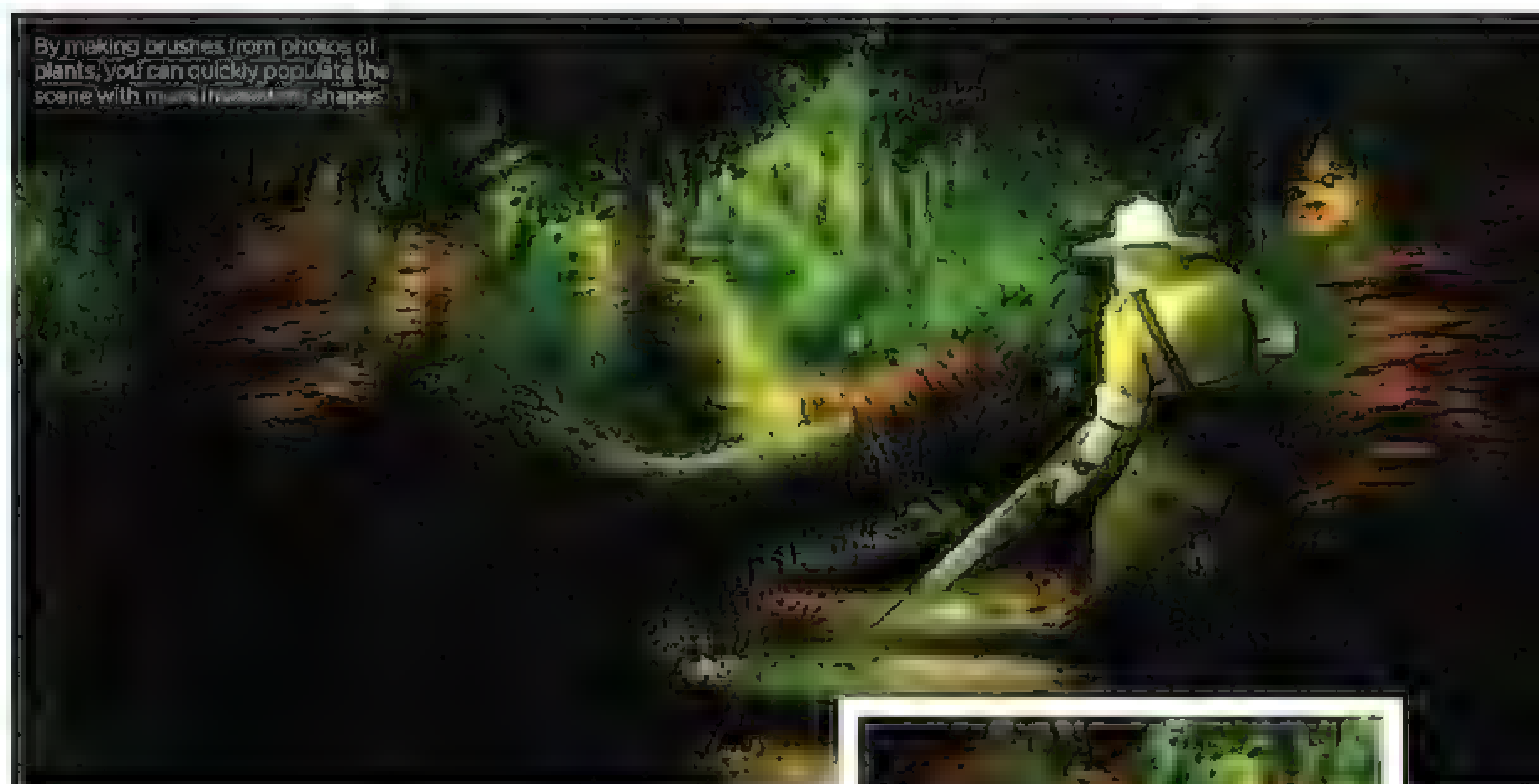
Jonathan is an English artist and illustrator. He's based near Toronto, Canada, and works for a developer in the video games industry.

www.jonathanstanding.com

Question

What's the best way to create a brush for painting foliage using Photoshop?

Scott Graham, UK



By making brushes from photos of plants, you can quickly populate the scene with more interesting shapes.

Answer

Jonathan replies



Photoshop's brush engine continues to become more robust. There are quite a few brushes that come with the

program and make foliage shapes. The Leaf brush in Photoshop, for instance, is so ubiquitous in digital art that it's taken on a bit of a life of its own!

Brushes that come with the program and others found online are good, but there's no substitute for making your own. By taking pictures of foliage or culling them from the web, you can get great high-resolution material for creating brushes. There are a few tricks to remember for this: first, you must desaturate the image that you have for your brush; second, try to keep your brush imagery in a separate image or layer. You'll

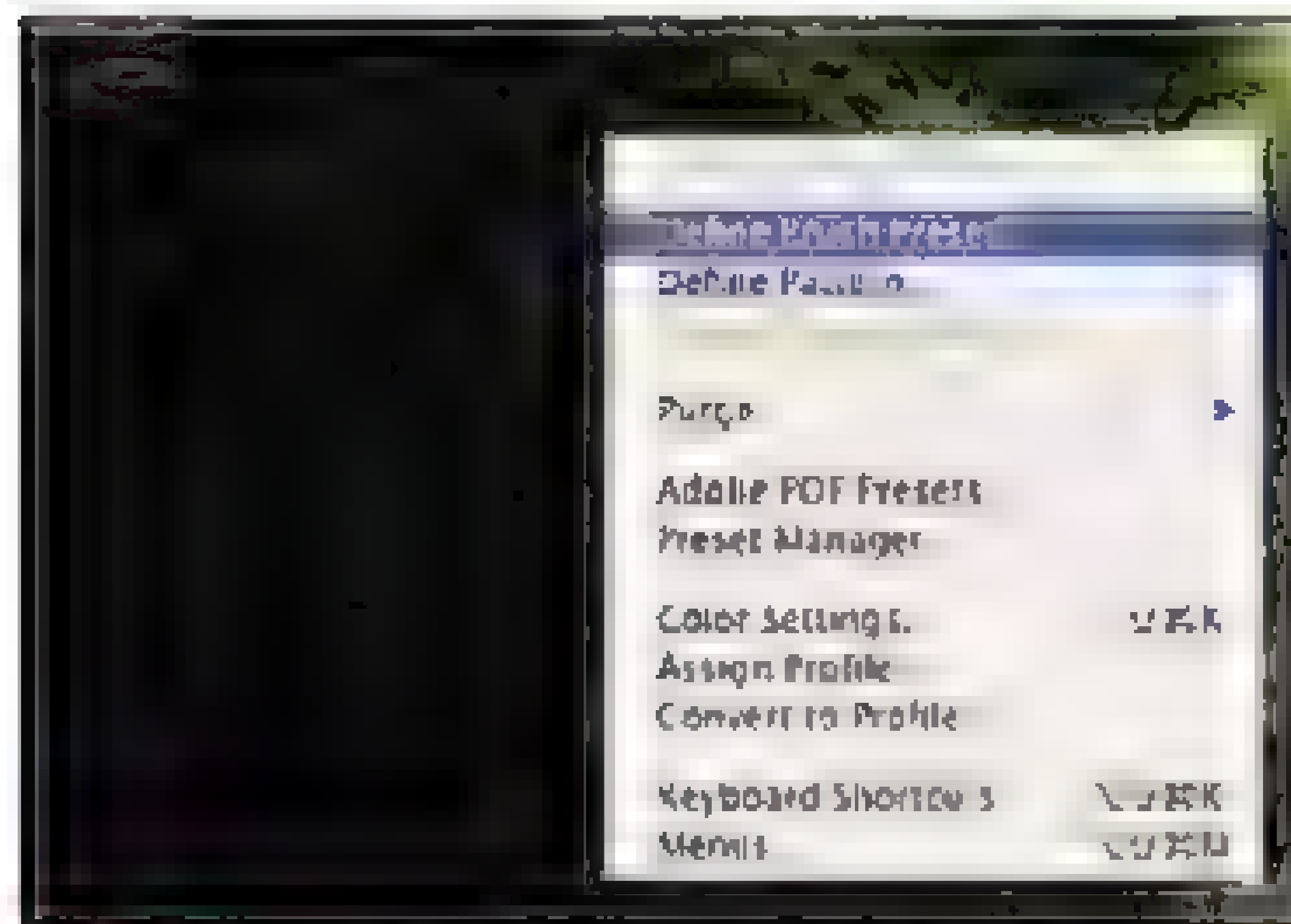
if you paint the scene using only one brush, the shapes of the leaves become monotonous.



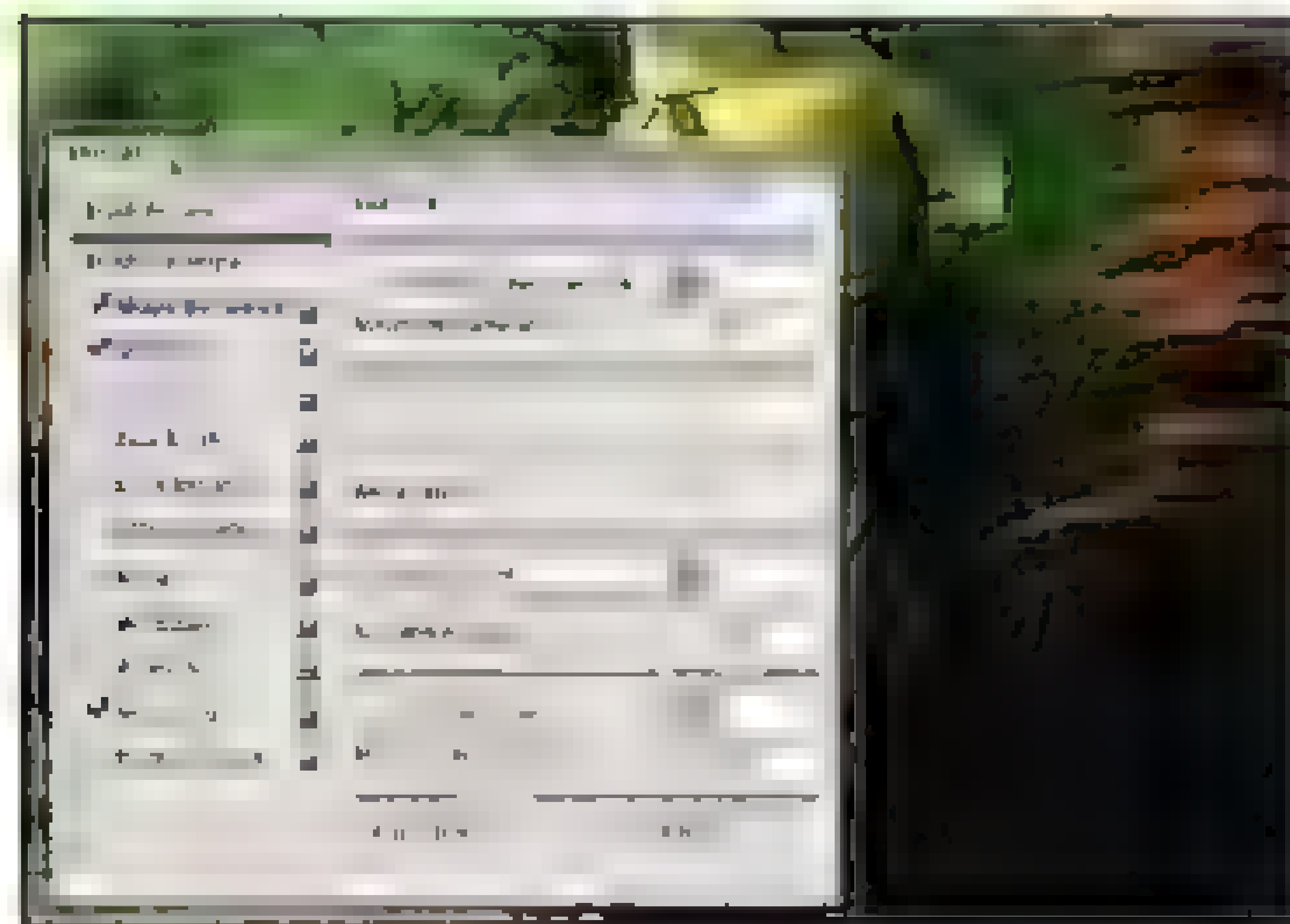
need to select it to define the parameters of your brush

Finally, when you desaturate the image to make it suitable as a brush, the shadows tend to be the darkest area – and this may not be the area you want to be applied the strongest. Try inverting the image to make the shadows light and the areas where the light is falling in the image, black

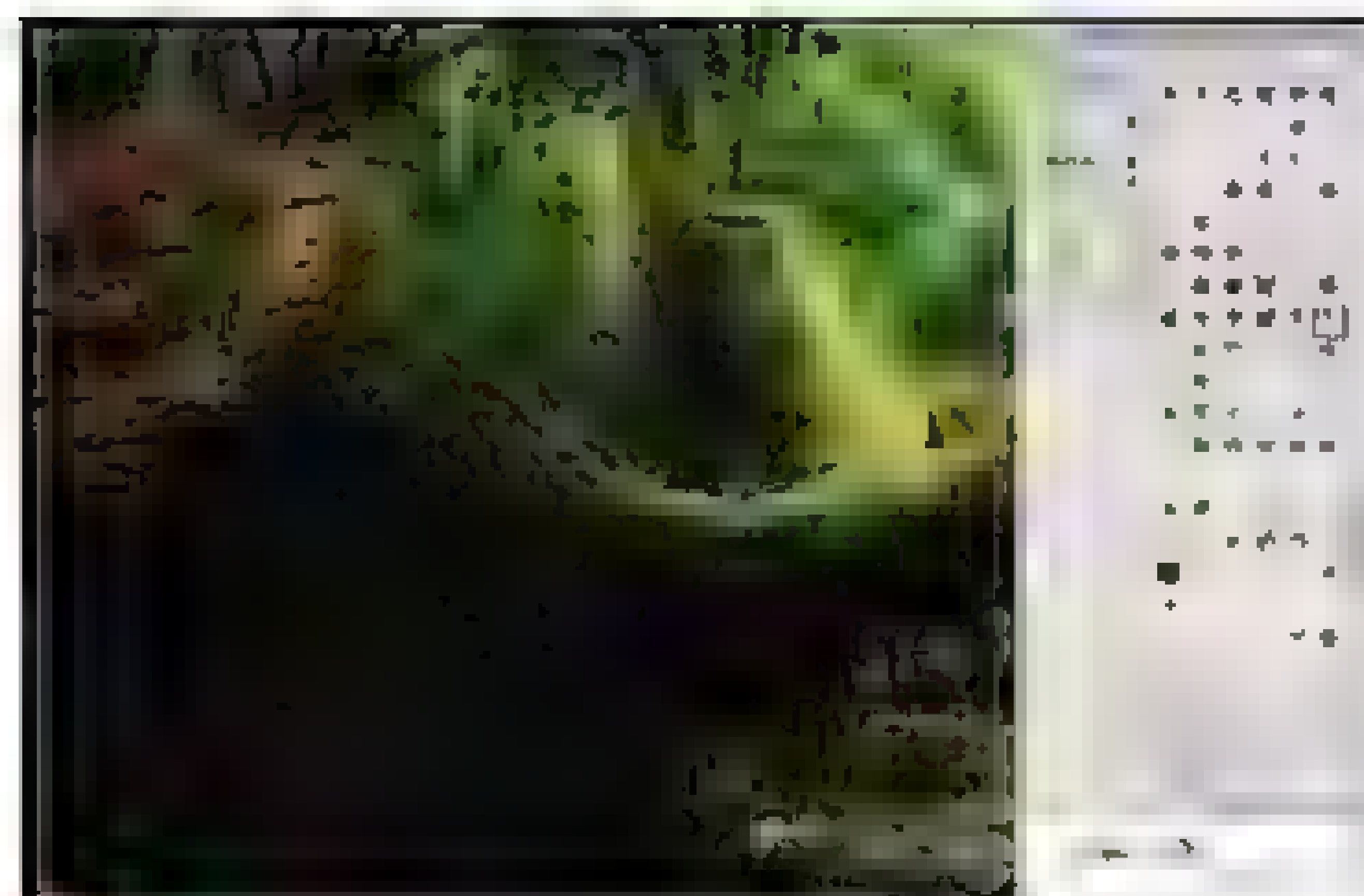
Step-by-step: Create custom brushes for foliage



- 1 Define Brush Preset is in the Edit drop-down menu. After creating the brush, I go into the Brushes menu and begin to refine what's there. You need to experiment before you have a brush that will make lots of interesting shapes.



- 2 Shape Dynamics is usually where I begin. I didn't touch the Roundness controls for a long time, but now find them invaluable for giving variety to the marks I can make using custom brushes. They're great for adding acute angles to shapes.



- 3 To produce extra variety, use the Dust Brush sub-menu. I find it takes a lot of tweaking to get the right effect, but it's worth it; this function alone often gives me some of the most useful results.

Question

Can you give me any advice on using Painter's pastel brushes in my images?

Berry Winters, USA



Painter's Pastel brushes are great for adding splashes of grainy texture to otherwise smooth areas. This is a secret ingredient for creating depth in shadows and backgrounds.

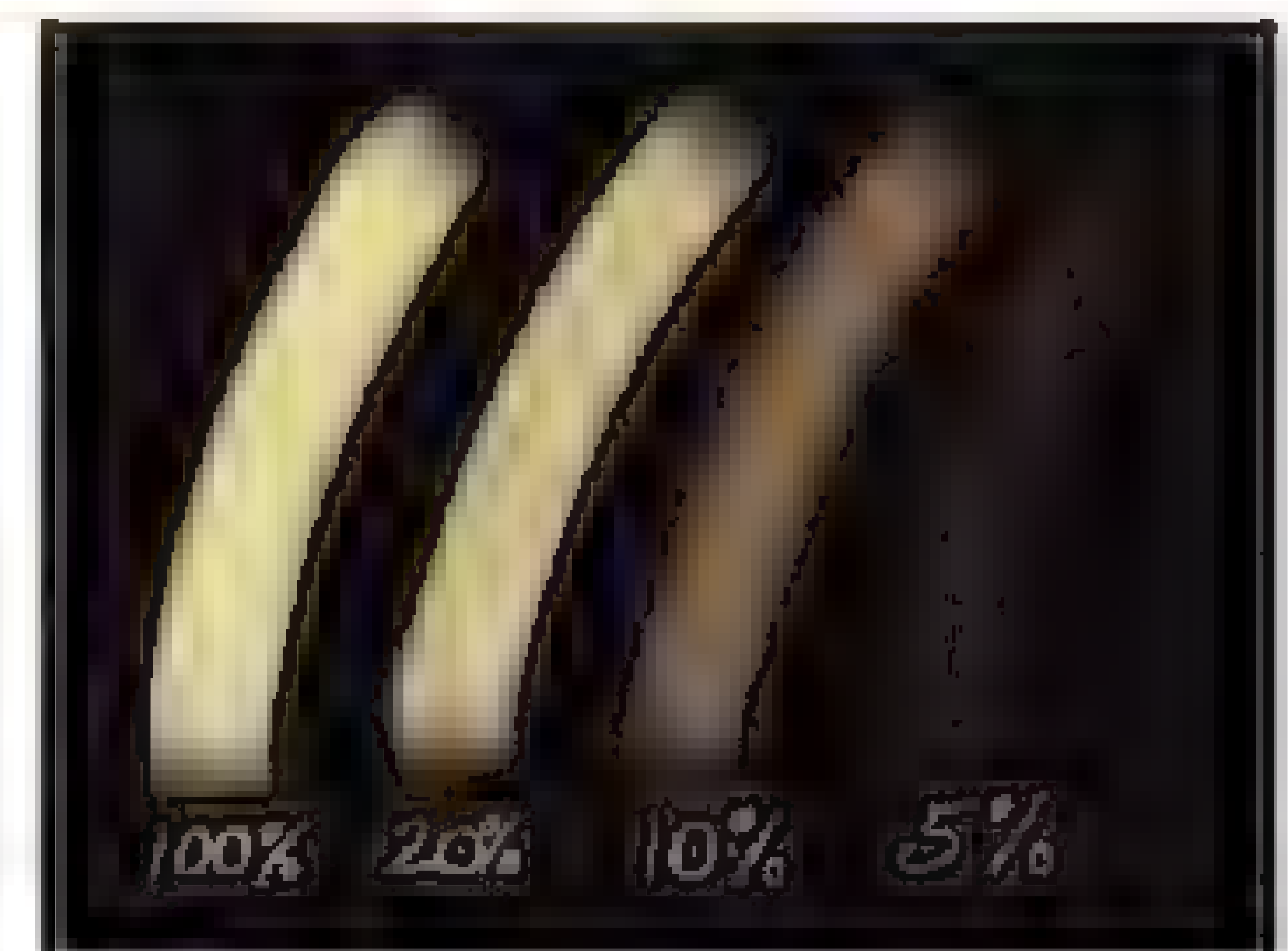
Answer

Lauren replies



Painter's Pastel brushes aren't just for recreating a traditional pastel look. They're also handy for adding texture and creating grainy blends on top of other painted areas. The latter is my favourite way to use them. I find that sweeping the Pastel brushes across a smooth area like skin or sky is a great way to add a nice punch of texture and depth, especially to shadows, without diminishing the original rendering.

Grain is the most important control for Painter's Pastel brushes – you'll find it next to the Opacity slider. It controls the amount of texture in the brush stroke, and is a little backwards: the higher the Opacity, the smoother the stroke. Keep an eye on the Opacity slider too – pastels show up well even with 5 per cent Opacity, and I think a lower setting gives me more control.



The Grain setting is especially important for Pastel brushes. Remember that the lower the Grain percentage, the grainier the stroke – as you can see in the samples above.

Painter has too many brush variants to list here, so make sure you play around with each to see which works best for you. Also check out the Oil Pastels: they're a little easier to work with if you want to do a lot of blending and rendering.

Question

How do I paint a sultry, feminine expression?

Daryl Chambers, US

Answer

Cynthia replies



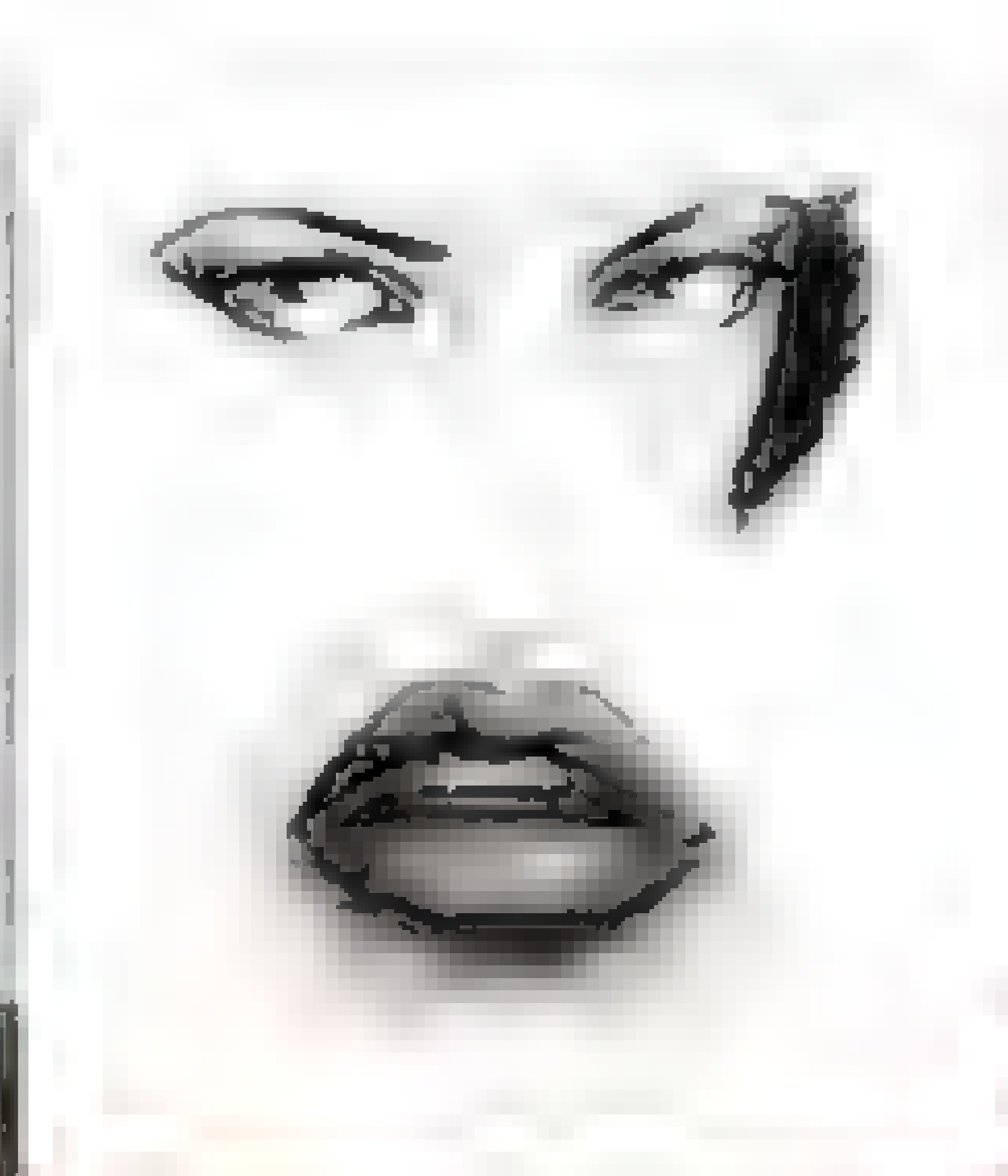
Although every woman's face is different, there are a few common female expressive tendencies that translate as a sultry look.

For starters, big, bold eyes are essential. Sultry eyes are often shown deeply shadowed in a head that's tilted down towards the object of the character's desire. At this angle, more of the white part of the eye becomes visible and the iris is only a small sliver. Often during passionate moments our pupils get bigger, so give your character dilated pupils for an especially sensual effect. For inspiration, look at actresses from old black and-white Hollywood movies who were well known for their sultry gazes, such as Veronica Lake and Lauren Bacall.

Next, you need to give your character a red flush to her cheeks. She might betray other outward signs of being in the heat of passion, such as shine on her nose and cheeks indicating a light sweat.

Finally, give her full lips that are slightly parted to show they're relaxed. Add a highlight on the bottom lip to suggest their plumpness or that they've been licked.

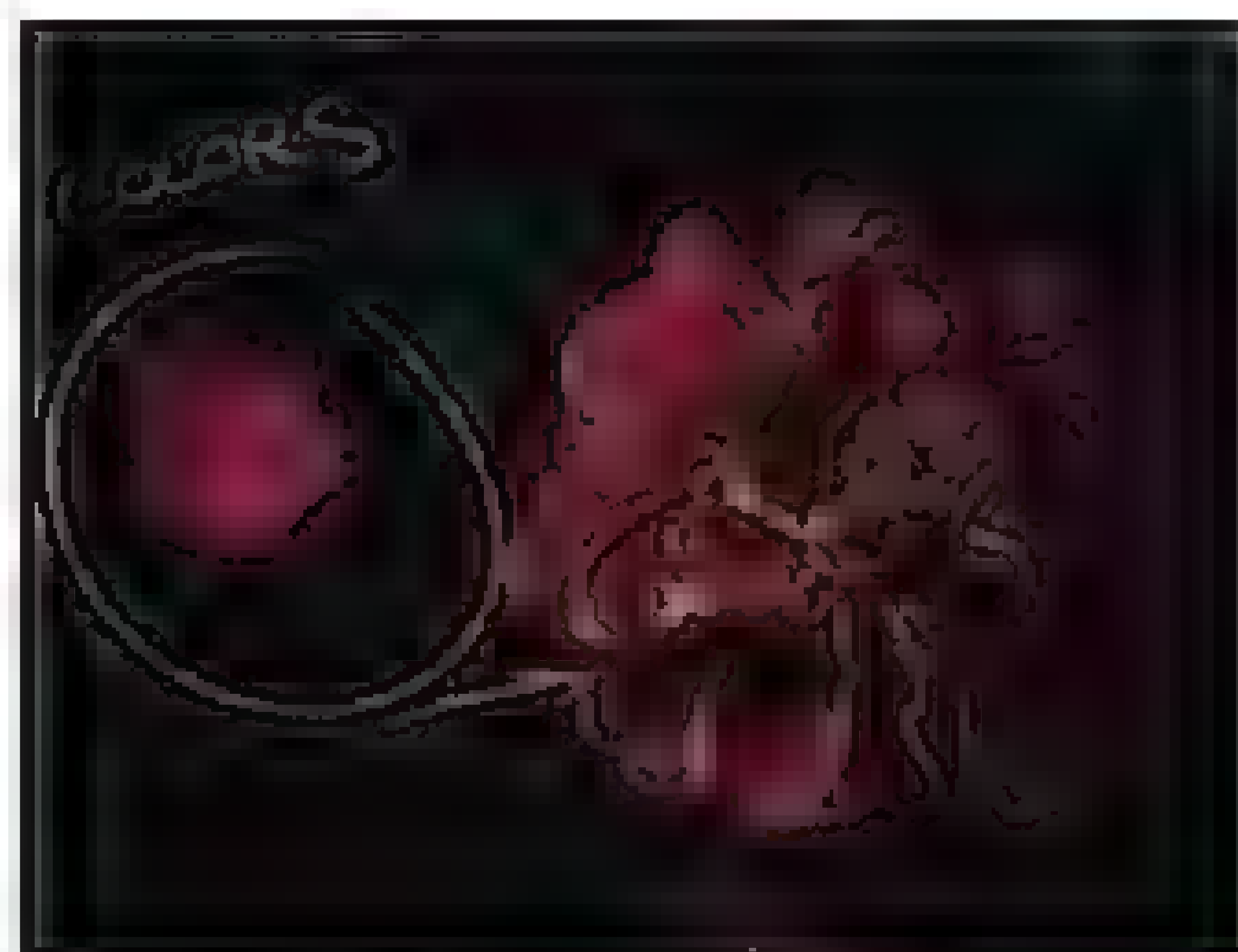
Down-turned eyes with lots of the whites showing and a slightly parted, full-lipped mouth give that sultry look to your character.



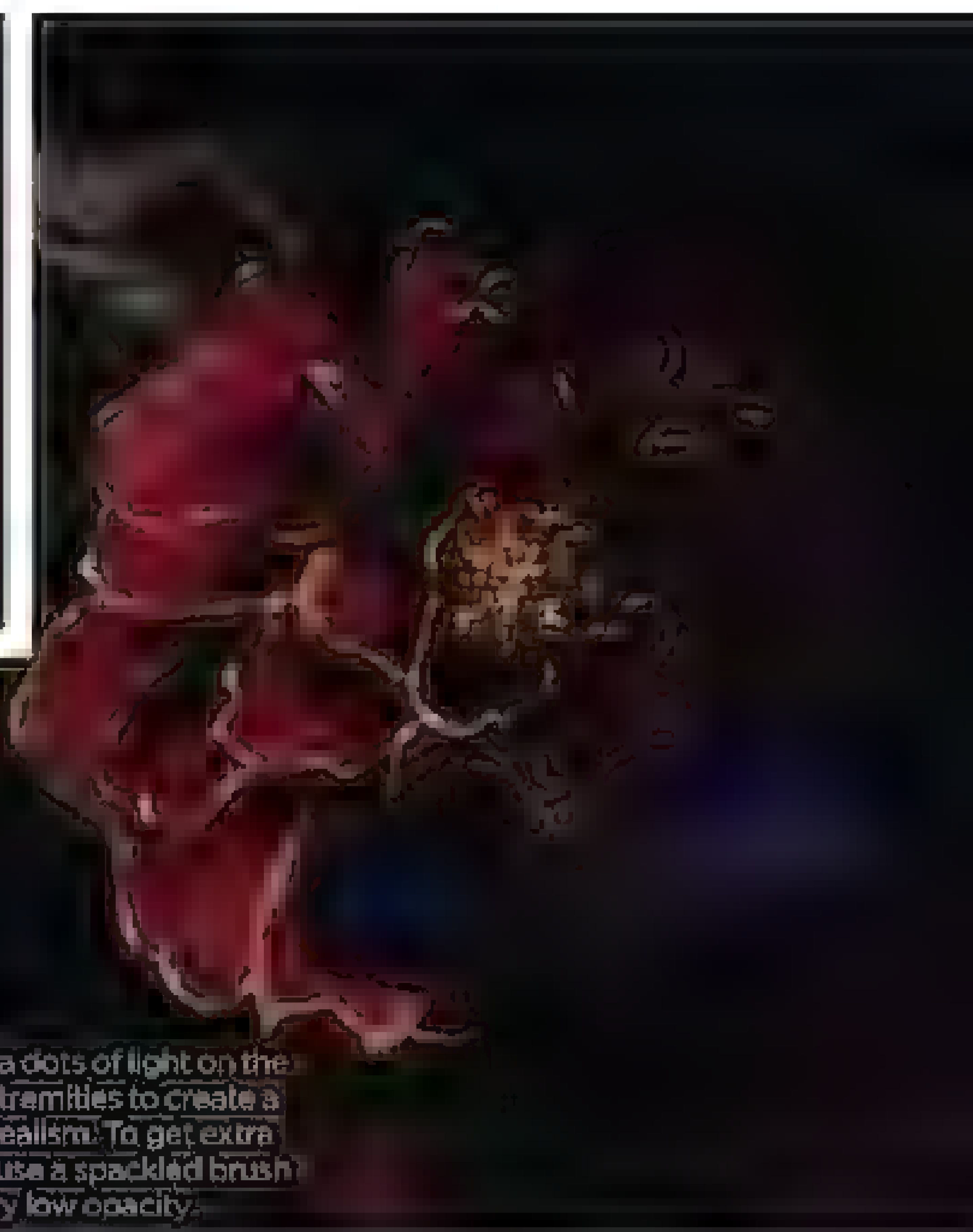
Question

I want to paint a colourful, delicate flower – any ideas?

Mary Clyde, Scotland



This is the base of my flower. The colour scheme is really simple and the petals are wild and all different shapes. I always paint the base with a basic round edge.



I add extra dots of light on the petals' extremities to create a sense of realism. To get extra texture, I use a speckled brush with a very low opacity.

Answer

Mélanie replies



Like everything, the best way to start is by choosing your colour scheme, and it's a good

idea to select a simple one. Once you have it, sketch the basic shape of your flower. Then add the first main petals. At this stage you don't need to have something well defined. In addition, remember that a flower must look thin and light, so the petals can't be straight and any shape variation is welcome. The best thing to do is never to paint the same petal twice or the flower will look fake and lifeless.

Once the shape is okay, I add details and more colours. Here, I choose to paint a fantasy flower with a golden outline that accentuates the irregular shape of the petals. I usually play with the layer mode at this stage, because this can offer some nice colour variations. Next, I add some orange and red to the petals – these warm colours add more life to my flower. I also add dots of saturated pink to give the flower texture.

Question

How do I paint a smile without it looking like a toothy mess? Marcus Renner, Austria

Answer

Lauren replies



Smiles are difficult. There isn't a lot of leeway between a smile that looks natural and one that looks forced, fake, or more like a grimace. So references are more important than ever when it comes to smiles. Studying photos gives you the chance to scrutinise not just the way the teeth sit inside the mouth, but also how the rest of the face contributes to the smile. The apples of the cheeks, smile lines, and slightly squinted

eyes are all details that sell a natural, genuine expression.

For the teeth I think it's important to imply detail instead of over-rendering. Too much tight detail is liable to make teeth look goofy. Also avoid painting teeth all the same size, sitting flat inside the mouth with no shadows or depth. Portraying a sense of depth is what makes teeth seem the most natural. But again, don't overdo the details. Teeth have volume, but keep it subtle.

All the traits of a lustful look combined – bold eyes, flushed cheeks and full, parted lips.

Question

When – and how – should I use custom brushes?

Susi Schneider, Germany

Answer

Remko replies



Creating and using custom brushes is huge fun and you just have to play around a lot with all the options in the natural media brushes to really understand their endless possibilities.

Try out all the options and see how your brushes react. You can save them in your Brush palette by clicking the small triangle above the Options panel in your Brushes window. Alternatively, like I do, create a shortcut (I use F2) to save them directly.

If you no longer need the brushes then click them while holding Alt. A pair of scissors appears and you can now delete the brush by clicking it. In this way, you can create your own Brush palettes for particular tasks, such as creating snow, stars, painterly pictures, costume patterns and so on.

Try not to abuse the custom brushes, though, because if you use them too much it can make your picture look muddy. I use them sporadically to give my pictures more texture and a painterly feel.

I always have a second canvas open at 1,000x1,000 pixels, where I make brushes directly depending on my needs. While I work, I create a brush inside it, save it in the Brushes palette and start using it directly on the painting I'm working on, often at the

Here are a few of the brushes I used to give this image a painterly feel. In the yellow area are my background brushes, in the blue are the ones I used for clothing patterns.



end of the painting process, on a layer set to Overlay above my work.

Custom brushes can be a great way to speed up certain processes, such as creating patterns on clothes, or stars in the sky. I use them as brushes but also with the Eraser or Dodge tools, which help me create some unique effects.

In this picture, I used custom brushes to give the background and the overall image a painterly look. I also used them to create the patterns inside the clothes.



Artist's secret

CREATE A LIBRARY

Important for my brushes: name, color, pattern (F2) + size.

Step-by-step: Painting a natural smile

- 1 Start by blocking in your shapes. Don't use flat white and remember the teeth recede into the mouth, so its corners will be darker. Don't forget the lips: a darker line on the edges gives a sense of form and makes the teeth stand out of the mouth.
- 2 Now start on the shading and blending. Figure out where the teeth end and the gums begin, and where the spaces are between the teeth. Don't use black for the spaces or make them uniform. You still don't need much detail – suggest things.
- 3 Push the shading and blending until you're satisfied. Remember that the gums go over the teeth and that the teeth have volume. Shade them subtly and pay attention to cast shadows from the lips and where the teeth curve back into the mouth.



Question

Can you suggest quick ways to add complex patterns to a dress?

Adrian Bradwell, England

Answer

Mélanie replies



Patterns are a fantastic way to bring more details to a dress, and to increase the effect of folds in material. They can be colourful or discreet, but either way they'll push the fabric to another level of detail.

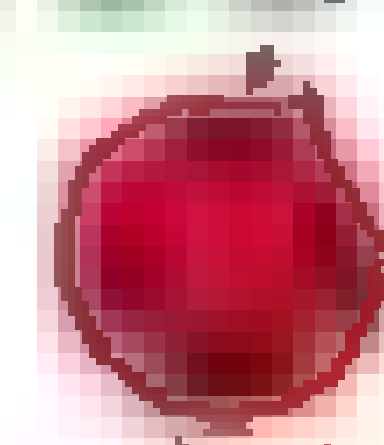
When I want to paint a pattern, the first thing I do is decide what I need. Painting wild shapes will destroy the entire dress or costume. This pattern needs to be worked as a whole – usually repetitive shapes following a complex architecture. I do some research before starting the design, as it will be useful to help me get the pattern right.

Once I know what kind of shapes I want, I can start to paint them. I typically paint over the almost-finished fabric, which is important because I want my pattern to be integrated with the rest of the dress or costume. Having the fabric unfinished forces me to work both elements together.

To get it done quickly, I focus my efforts on where I want to attract the eye – the rest of the painting doesn't need to be overly

detailed, so the pattern can stay sketchy. It's also important to keep it simple at the beginning of the process. I always start with a basic shape and one or two colours at most. Complex patterns need to have a strong base to be readable and convincing.

You don't have to paint patterns everywhere on the fabric, because heavy ones like this could distract the viewer and ruin the painting.



Artist's secret

THE PATTERN BRUSH

→ you need to produce it

the first

the first

the first

the first

the first

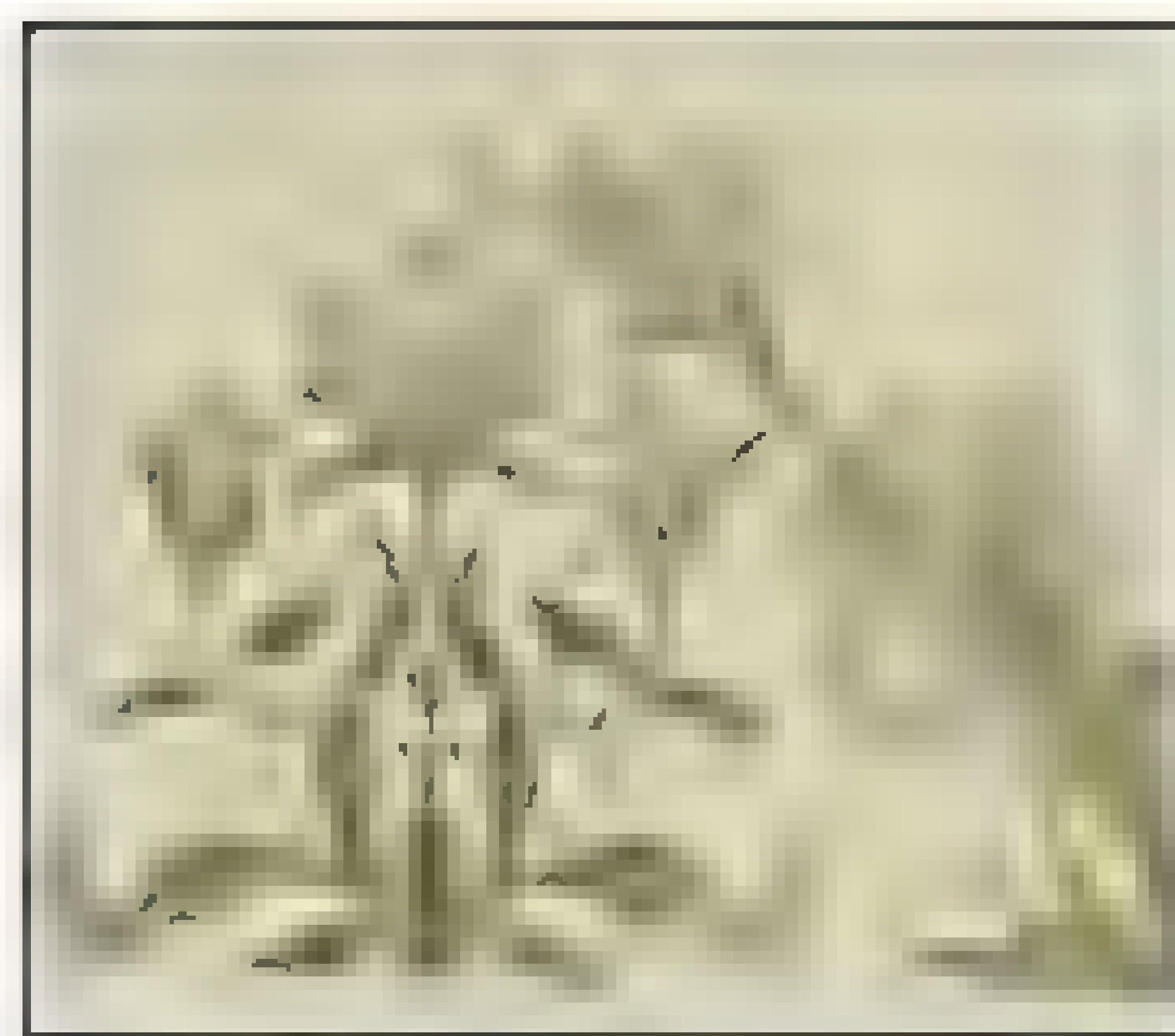
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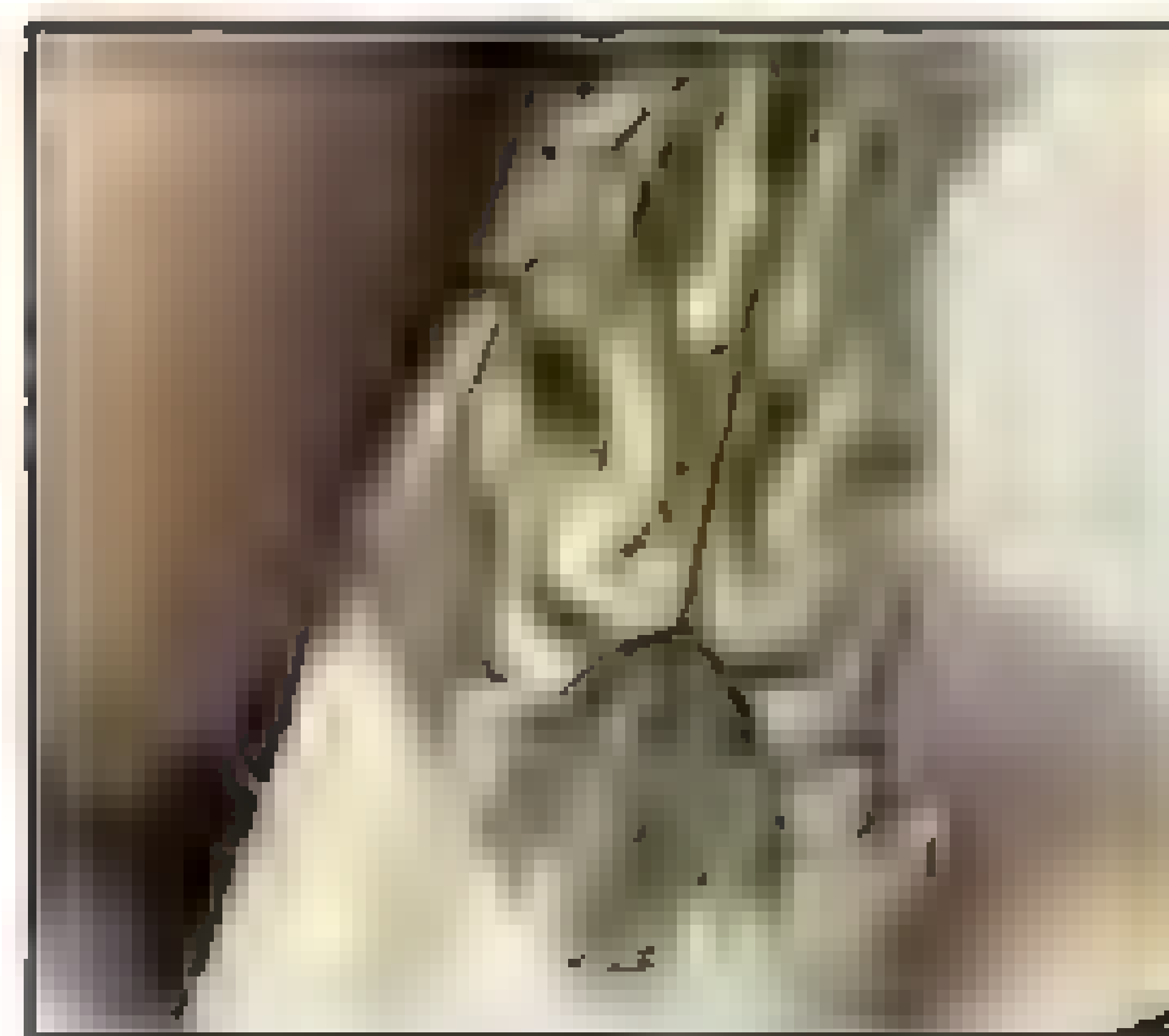
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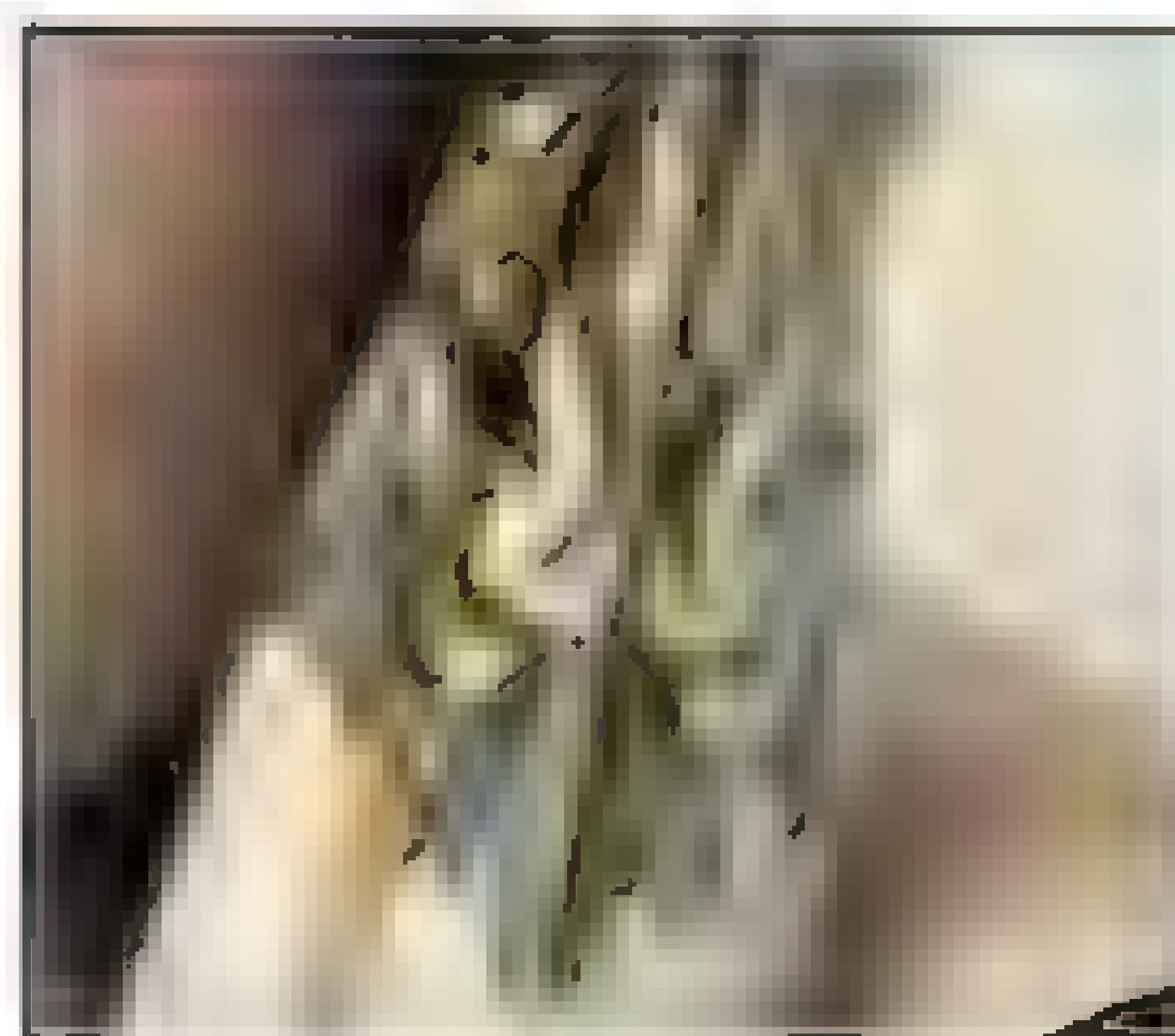
Step-by-step: Adding patterns to your clothes



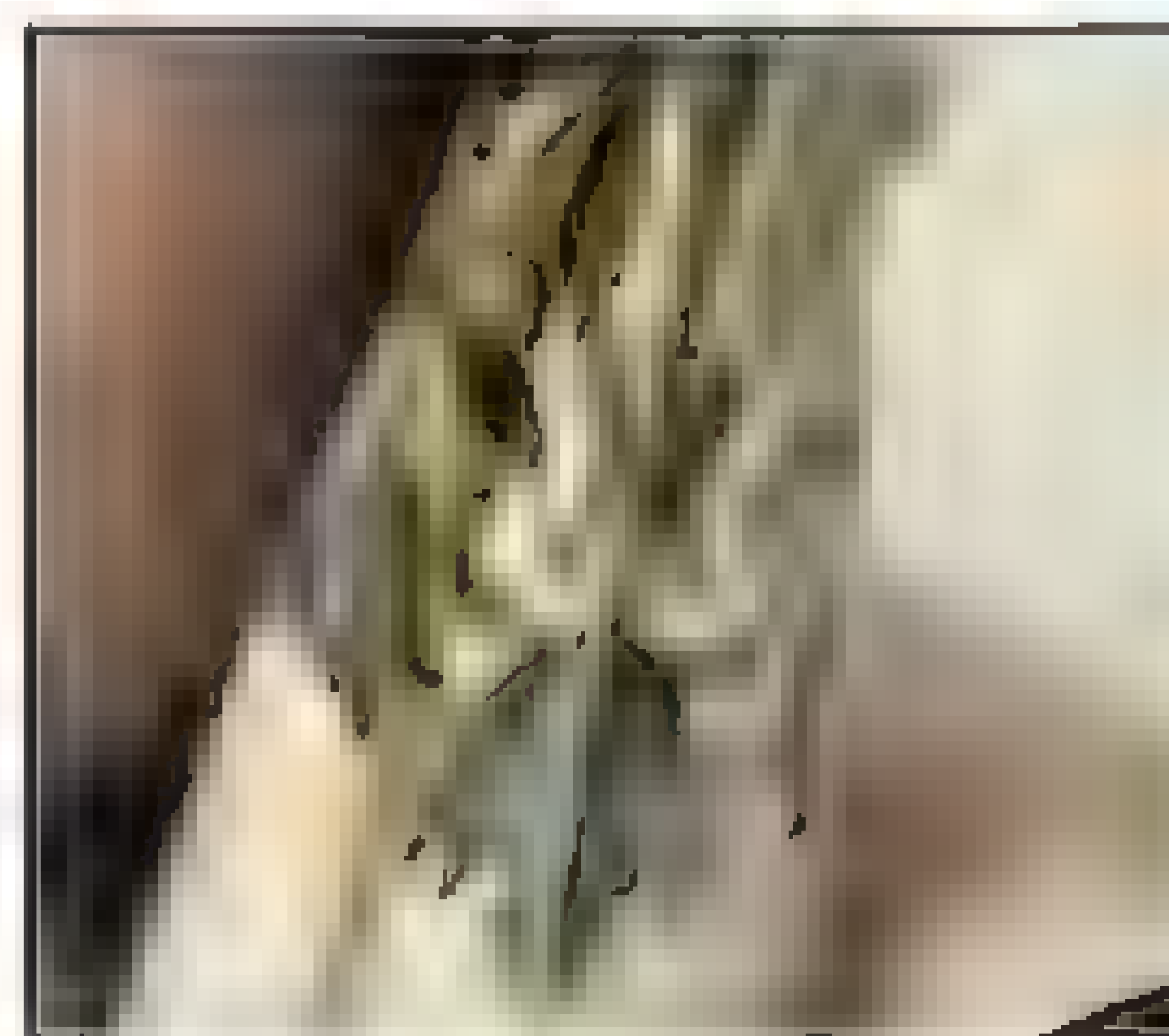
- 1 I always start by designing the pattern, which I usually do on a new file. This helps me to focus on the pattern itself instead of the whole painting. The file can also be used as a reference when you need to add extra elements to the pattern – or indeed, extra patterns to the clothes – later in the painting.



- 2 Now, I paint the design (or import it from the file into the main illustration and use the Wrap Transformation tool to make sure it suits the folds in the clothes). I add another colour to produce details and provide balance in the image. Sometimes patterns can be too repetitive, so adding an extra colour helps me to avoid this.



- 3 The pattern is now ready for light and shadows. This is the most important step because I'm about to integrate it into the fabric's folds. The pattern must follow them, so slowly add shadows and light on another layer. Repeat this several times until the pattern is completely integrated with the costume.



- 4 Next, I add a few details and some extra light. For this, I use a basic round-edged brush with Hardness set to 40 per cent. I don't want sharp details here, because I'd like the fabric to look really soft so the pattern must reflect this. I also blur some areas to increase the integration of the pattern with the fabric.



Question

Do you have any tips on blending colours smoothly in Photoshop?

Katie Lo, Singapore

Answer

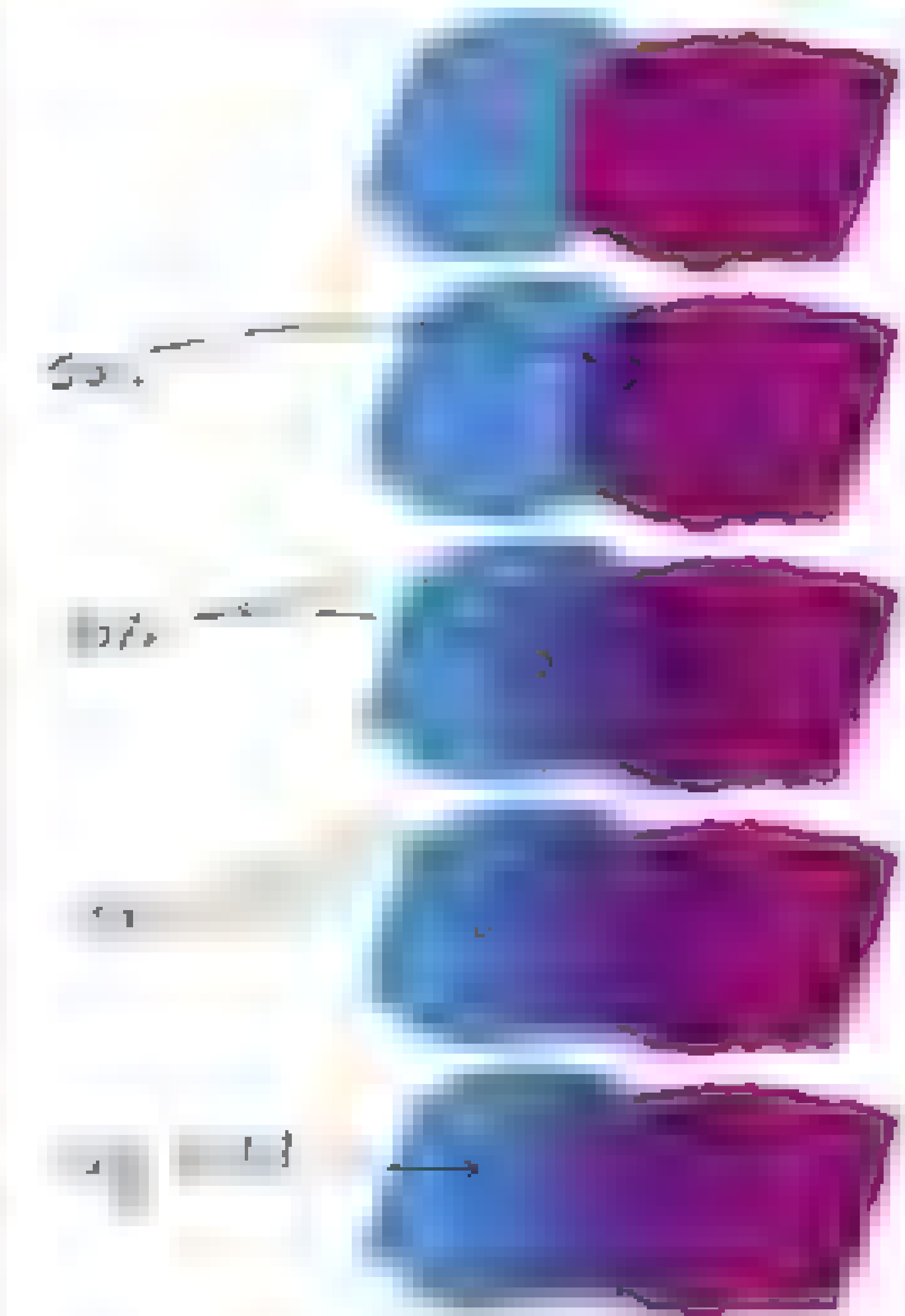
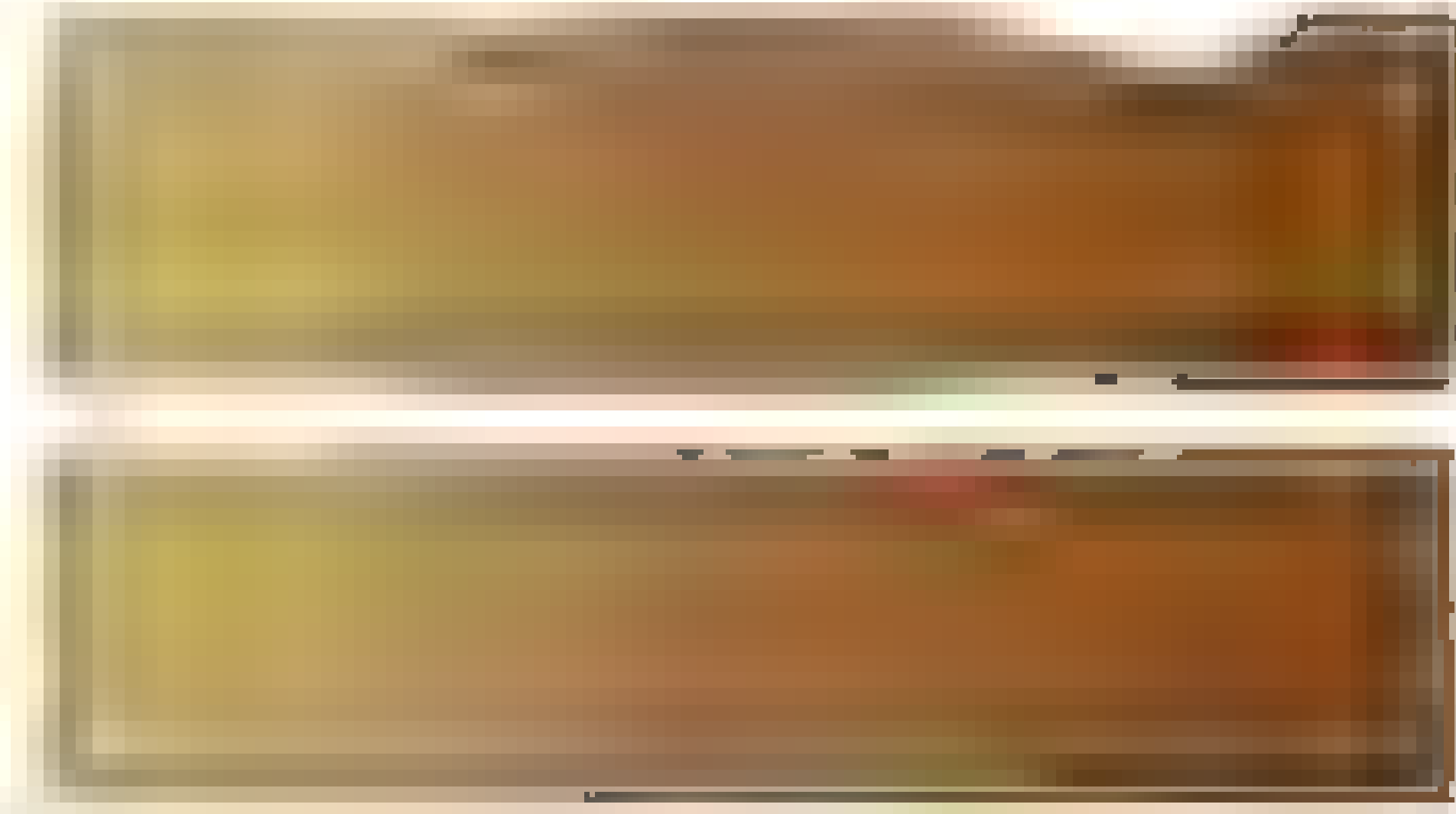
Cynthia replies



My favourite tip for anyone who's struggling with blending is to train yourself to constantly toggle the Eyedropper while using the Paintbrush tool (using Alt or Option). This habit enables you to sample a colour quickly from within your piece, then paint it over a neighbouring colour, and repeat that motion without taking lots of trips to the Colour Picker to choose a shade that matches the one you're working with.

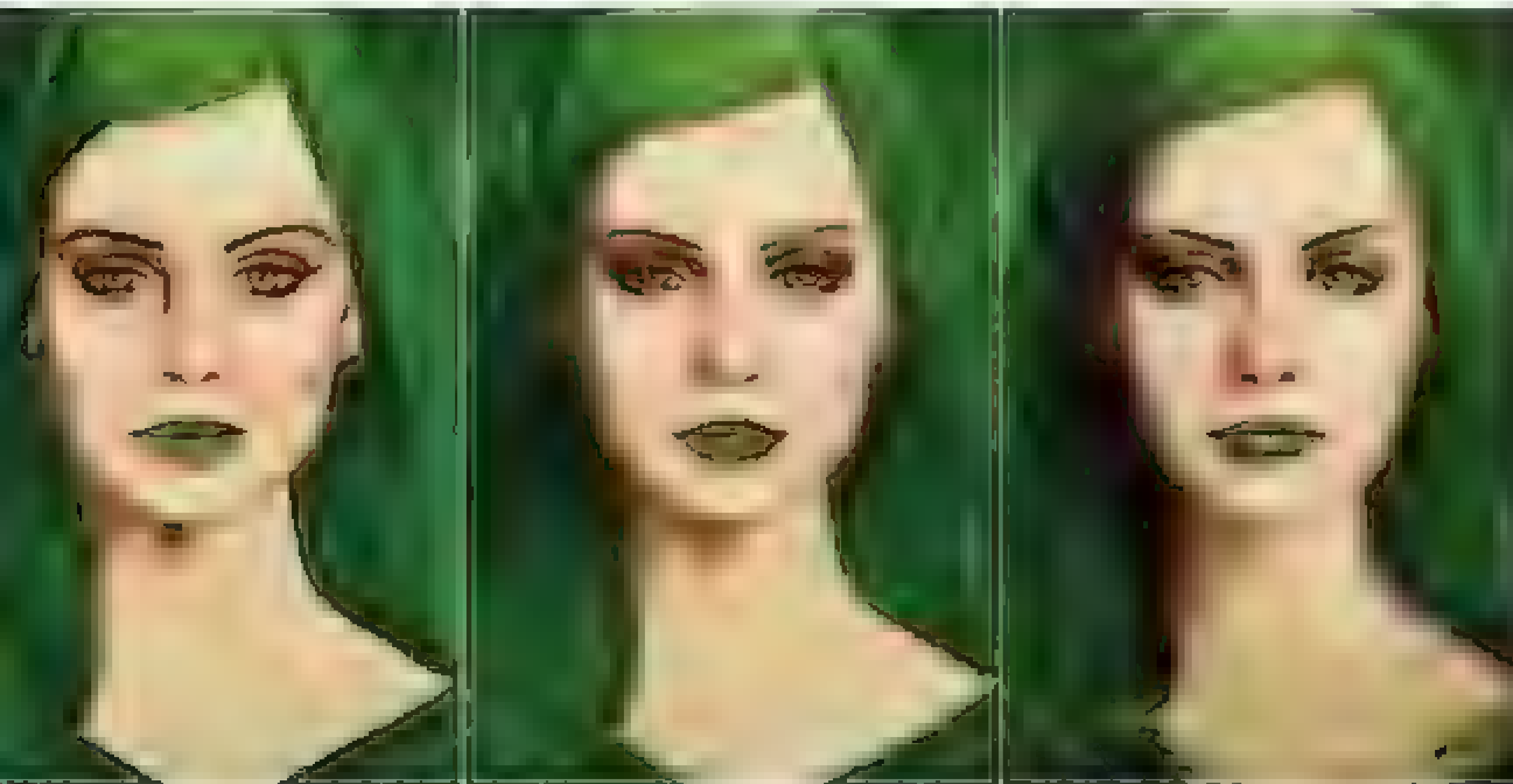
The mechanics of blending look something like this: the colours blue and pink sit next to each other with a hard edge that I'd like to blend. I sample the blue colour, then, using a hard-edged brush set to 50 per cent Opacity, I paint over the pink area, which gives me a perfect mix of the two colours. Next, I sample the new mixed colour and paint over both the neighbouring colours, resulting again in a middle colour, which I repeatedly sample and blend into its neighbours. When you're toggling the Eyedropper tool using your keyboard, this process becomes very smooth and fast with practice.

These images show three stages in the process of blending colours using the Eyedropper technique.



Different directional strokes can help blending. If your blending looks uneven, try reducing the Opacity or Flow on your brush.

You can further change the look of your blending by using different directional brushstrokes. If you're painting a curved surface, for example, you probably don't want to use straight vertical lines like those in the top example. You might try using curved strokes or crosshatches.



Question

How do I paint an image of a crashed meteor?

Daniel Ridgewell, England

Answer

Nick replies



The visible path of a meteoroid that enters Earth's atmosphere is called a meteor. If a meteoroid reaches the ground and survives impact, then it's called a meteorite. So a glowing lump of rock is what we need.

'Glowing' implies something creating its own light, secondary to the overall lighting conditions. Choosing orangey, molten lava colours for the rock, the glow will be enhanced using bluish ambient light. Pick different colours for more creative, alien effects. I work from the lighter core, blending loosely to the dark outer crusty edges, before adding a fractured, darker surface over it on another layer. I lighten up

the details after I've painted the basic shape and glow.

To really get the glow, I lay a blue colour fill set to Multiply blending over everything and lighten the meteorite heat using a light orange chalk. Finally, I pick out details lit by the glow in a suitable colour.



You can show how much the object is glowing by how brightly it lights up elements around it. In the case of something hot, it sets fire to some of them.

Question

What's the best way to introduce a glowing light source in my image?

May Johnston, New Zealand

Answer

Remko replies



I'll demonstrate a few techniques by painting a hologram. On a new layer, with a standard round hard-edged brush and Pen Pressure on, I draw the hologram - a darker background will make it pop out. For this light source, I often use bright, saturated colours or white. I also play around with the layer effects, especially to create the outer glow. Using vivid colours like red or electric blue as an outer glow on white produces a nice look.

Next, I duplicate the layer containing the hologram and put it above the first one. On the above layer, I apply a Blur or Motion Blur and then try different opacities. I also create several new layers with



the hologram on them, and try out different blurs and layer modes.

You could then make a speckled custom brush with fine spots and use it to paint around your hologram as if some energy is escaping from it.

Question

How should I paint a creature crawling out of a pitch-black hole?

James Mullooly, US

Answer

Nick replies



The first thing that springs to mind is the word 'chiaroscuro', which was bandied about when I was at college to describe

Renaissance paintings with dramatic lighting. It's a great place to start even if you aren't a fan of this style of art, which usually reflects the religious and political leanings of the time and place it was created.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio is a prime and influential example of someone who used this style. Scenes are lit as if by a spotlight in the darkness, with form picked out from the gloom. That's just what we're looking for here.

I've picked a sewer pipe as the pitch-black place and the seldom-seen Pipe Cleaner, a creature obsessed with cleanliness in surroundings not suited to helping that

drive, as my subject. The thing that will make your emerging creature read best is to understand the shapes and form you're working with – so even though you'll only see portions of the character, try to work out the whole anatomy and pose. Also pick a pose where a degree of foreshortening may thrust some portions into the light, leaving others in the dark. In this case, the creature's torso and extra arms do that.

To give more nuance and interest to the dark, I overlay differently coloured layers set to Multiply over a solidly painted base. Think about how the light will describe the form where it shows and use elongated shadows where appropriate. Finally, have fun with the highlights and contrasts – using them to focus the eye on certain areas is key to getting this type of image right.



Try to say something about your character by placing it somewhere with a few clues. I've used the bar of soap to explain what's going on here.

Question

Do you have tips for painting large, intricate tattoos?

Macy Williams, US



Answer

Jonathan replies



There are a lot of things you can do right from the start to make things easier. First, pay attention to the skin colour that you give to a character – tattoos are generally more legible on lighter skin, so if the colour of your character's skin doesn't matter, keep their skin lighter, no matter what their intended ethnicity is. I usually make sure I draw and then render the body of the character before trying to add the tattoo; the more complex the tattoo, the easier it is to lose sight of what's happening underneath it. Musculature is hard enough to get right as it is, so break these two tasks into distinct steps.

I start with a Multiply layer and begin knocking in some big shapes in linework. Try not to make the colour too saturated, because it's better if some of the skin's local colour can shine through. Similar to a real tattoo artist, it's useful to establish the way the lines function before trying to block in colours. It's important that the lines work with and follow the character's muscle structure. If the tattoo doesn't conform to the structure supporting it then it'll flatten out your image. The more it resembles the muscles underneath, the more depth you add.

Next month
ON SALE: 8 March
Discover how to paint
whiskers on a dragon



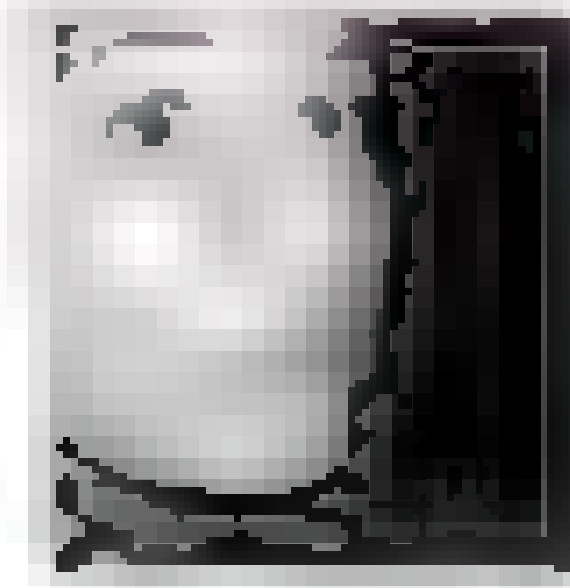
Question

How do I give my creature
a human personality?

Ben Sturridge, Australia

Answer

Brynn replies



The main tool that humans use to relate to one another is the face, and one thing you'll observe about it is that our eyes face forward – a trait common to all primates. Now, imagine an invisible triangle that extends from the eyes down to the mouth. The 'human connection' between your viewer and this invisible triangle is key to giving your creature a more human personality.

It's a good idea to study your own face as well as other people's to pick up on expressions. Once you're able to determine how to draw a face that looks sad or surprised, you can then apply this knowledge to a non-human face. Animals use other tools for expression and communication, like their tails, ears and posture. Using these can support the expression you're conveying in the face.



Here you can easily recognise and warm to the shape and balance of the human face in the creature's features.



Artist's secret

THE HUMAN CONNECTION

Step-by-step: Give your creatures personality

- 1 If we bring the eyes in from the side of the head and place them facing forward, we already have a more human-looking herbivorous creature. Adding whites to the eyes helps to keep the animal relatable. The brow is also important here – he looks confused with one up and one down.
- 2 Humans don't pant, so keeping the creature's mouth closed can help to add some extra humanity. The mouth is also where we tend to show a lot of expression, giving away certain feelings and emotions. I've added a bit of a sneer, which makes his nose scrunch up a little.
- 3 Finally, you can make tweaks to the ears, tail and posture to help humanise your creature further. In this sketch, you can see pushed one ear back and one forward – a common sign of confusion among mammals. You should also be able to see a 'weary' posture in the larger image.

Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.

ImagineFX
MARCH 2011



ELEKTRA CROUCHING

Even today, Bill is asked to create new images of Elektra for private collectors



Don't Sienk

... ..

We speak to the man who
forever, exerting a massive
and graphic de



WAV



Artist PROFILE

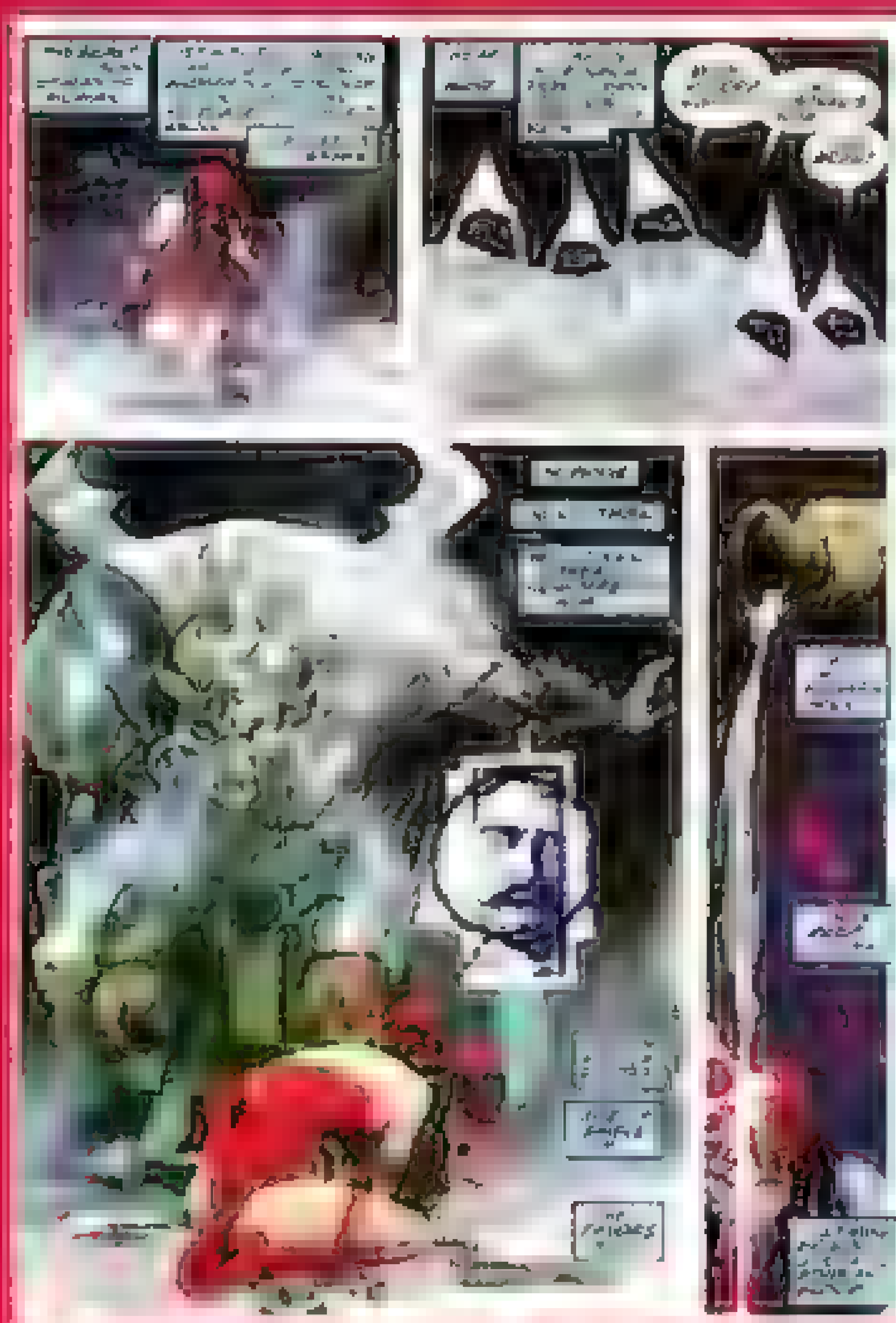
Bill Sienkiewicz

A descendant of Nobel prize-winning novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz, Bill has made his own impact on literature through numerous comics projects since breaking into the industry. He's recently relocated from Connecticut to Los Angeles.

www.billsienkiewiczart.com



ELECTRO LOVE
 Jimmy Fallon's first solo single (feat. DJ's
 partner with Dave Navarro)



LOVE & WAR

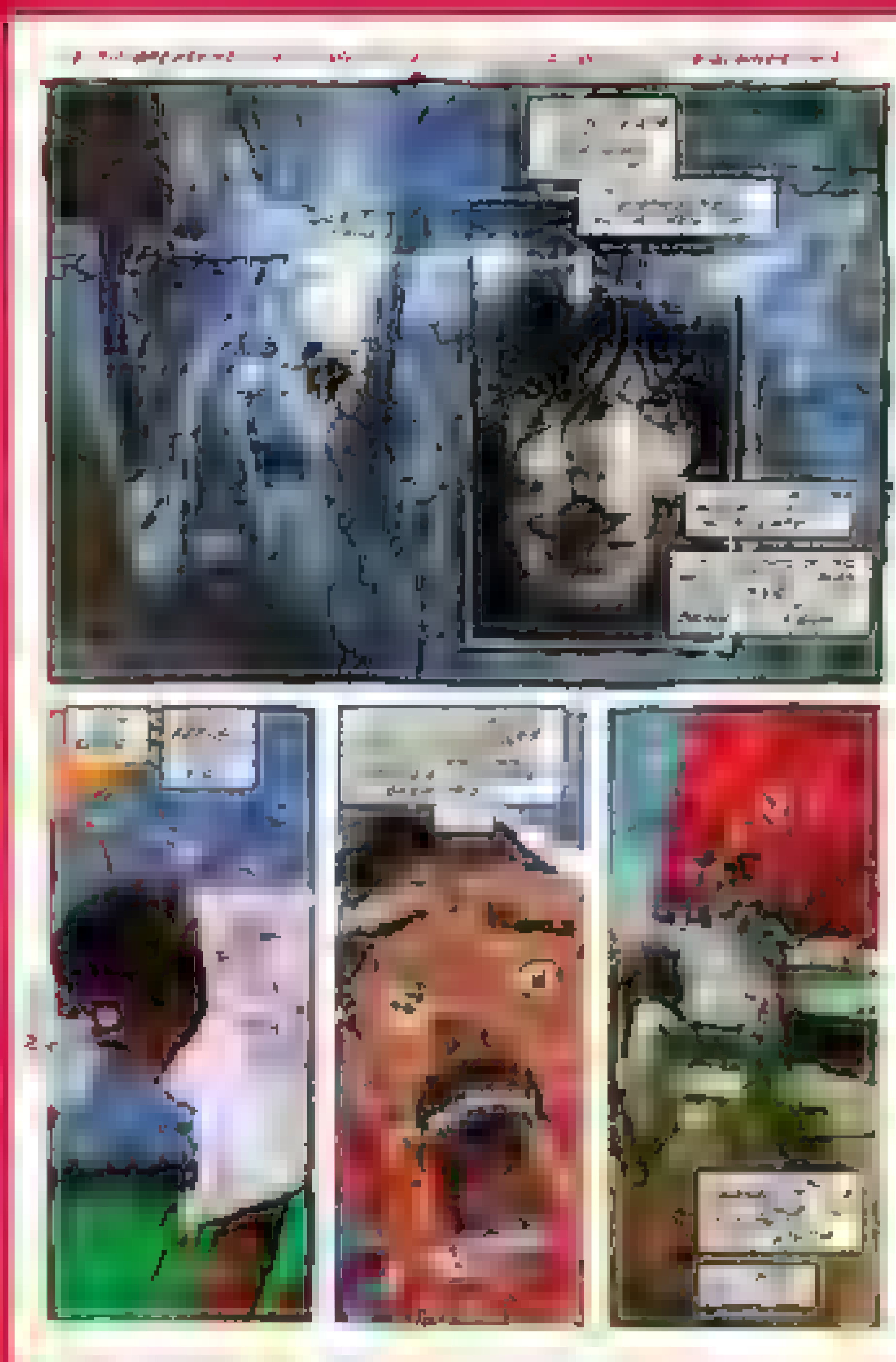
With Frank Miller and Bill Sienkiewicz both working on the same titles, something good was bound to result.

The Elektra and Daredevil stories Bill worked on in the mid-80s saw his popularity skyrocket. They also gave him a chance to work with Frank Miller, a comic book legend. Bill remembers a lot of the time during the period he collaborated with Frank. "We were working on Elektra: Assassin and at the same time we were doing Love & War, which was the graphic novel," he explains. "We spent so much time just laughing our asses off and having a great time coming up with the ideas for it."

It was he came up with the script for the first issue, which was a love story. "I would just write something that excited me," he says. "I would write it, and then I would just go back and rewrite it. So we played around with it for a while, and then we went to work on it."

ELEKTRA ISSUE 1

Mixed media imagery, with irreverent doodling, plus adult themes.



ELEKTRA & DAREDEVIL

Elektra and Daredevil stars in Love & War, one of the 1980s' most iconic comic book covers. Bill Sienkiewicz and Frank Miller



“When it came out there was literally no response for a week or two,” Bill recalls. “People didn’t know what to think of it or what to make of it. So we felt like it was a real misfire. But we shouldn’t have been surprised that a lot of people didn’t get it. We didn’t get it either. All we knew was that we were trying something different.”

He created the artwork for Elektra and the Daredevil story Love & War that year with the legendary Frank Miller, who wrote the stories. The two were in sync and unstoppable, and both have since enjoyed stellar careers beyond comic books.

However, his first Marvel gig was Moon Knight in 1980, which was pivotal in his formation as an artist. Graduating from Newark School of Fine and Industrial Arts in New Jersey, he loved posters and

SANDMAN

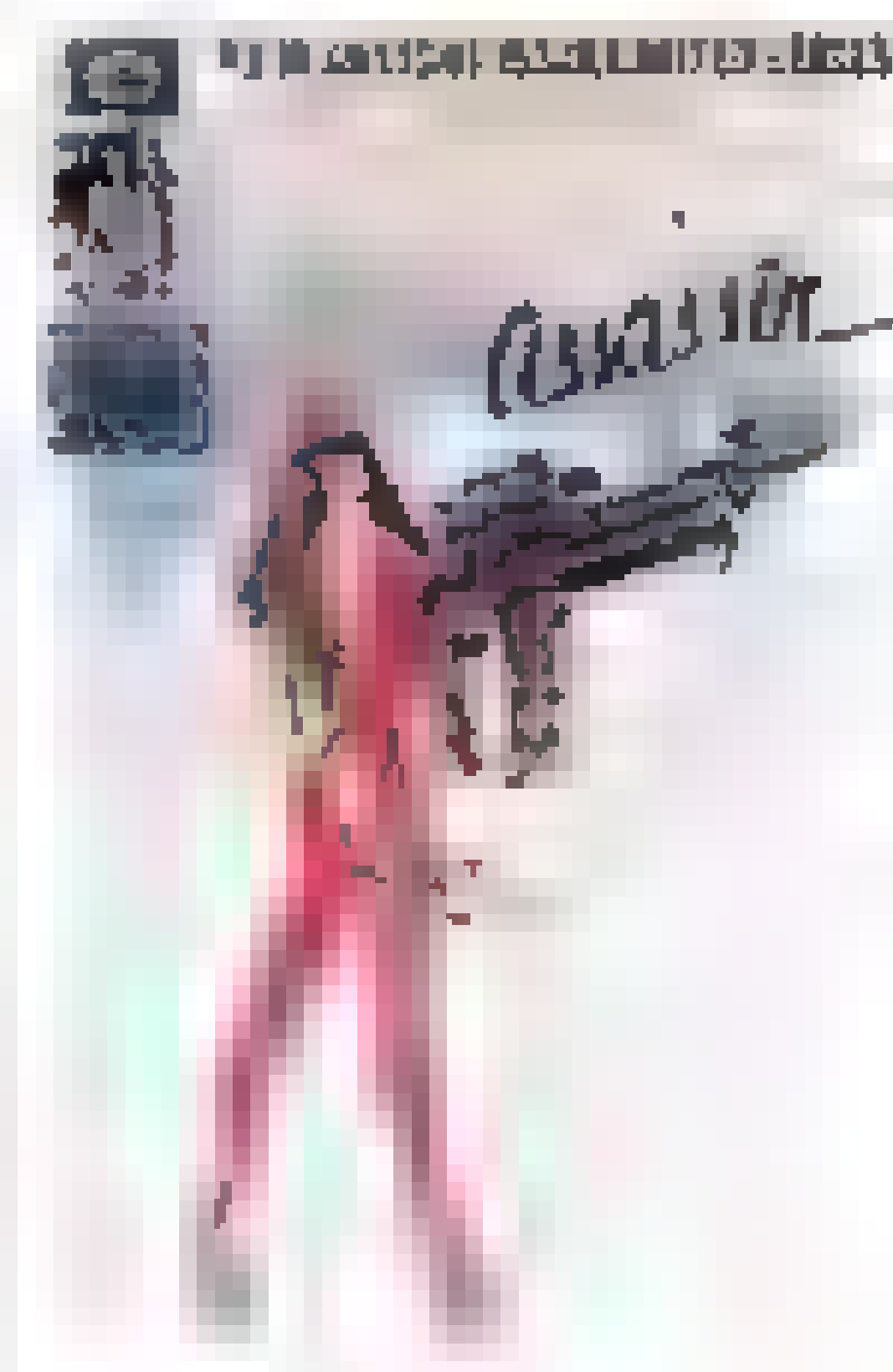
Along with six other illustrators, Bill won an Eisner Award in 2004 for his chapter in Neil Gaiman’s *The Sandman: Endless Nights*.

magazines, but chose to pursue a job in comics. A strong start with Moon Knight was followed by criticism that he was too similar to Neal Adams, whose art Bill both admired and studied. Stung by the comments, he used Moon Knight to explore ways of being as un-Adams-like as possible.

“A lot of the time, I would jump away from drawing anything at all similar to Neal, almost like putting my hand on a hot stove. If I felt it looked a little bit too much like Neal, even if I hadn’t been thinking about it, my response would not be unlike two magnets of the same polarity coming into contact. I’d slingshot off into a

ELEKTRA FIRST ISSUE COVER

Leading comic artists, fantasy illustrators and graphic designers cite the cover of Elektra Issue 1 as an influence.



WESTERN THEMED

A composition based on *Unforgiven*, created a few years ago, Bill is planning a project with a Western theme with the working title *River of Blood*.

different solution, a different arena or a different direction. So Moon Knight was a huge turning point for me,” Bill says.

BRANCHING OUT

Cementing his artistic vibe with the Elektra stories was a precursor to writing and drawing his own graphic novel in 1988, *Stray Toasters*. Two years later, Bill did a powerful graphic novel version of *Moby Dick* for Classics Illustrated and also worked on four series of political collectors cards for Eclipse Comics, which commented on issues such as US support for puppet dictatorships. They were all key creative moments for him.

The 90s steered Bill back into illustration for movie posters and covers for magazines including *Entertainment Weekly* and *Spin*. He also created the fantastic *Voodoo Child: The Illustrated Legend of Jimi Hendrix*.

“We shouldn’t have been surprised that a lot of people didn’t get it. We didn’t get it either. We just knew we were trying something different.”



➤ Picking up digital tools like Photoshop and Illustrator, he could work faster and make client amends more efficiently, but he still loves to work with physical materials. "I do a lot more digital now than I did, and for a period I worked in nothing but digital – but I'd base it on a lot

“Comics needn't be the sister, brother or relative of theatre, film or anything else. Let comics be comics”

of stuff that I've learned from actual media," Bill says. "If I'm working in acrylic and I've got gesso or matte medium or any kind of plastic gloop on my hands, and I have to wash it off, it's a tactile sensation. It isn't like I'm drawing on a piece of glass."

Bill has never turned his back on comics, evidenced in his sublime chapter in Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman: Endless Nights*, for

which he shared an Eisner Award in 2004 and *30 Days of Night and Nightmare Factory Volume 2*. Marrying comics and film, he perfectly captured the Joker's insanity in concept art for *The Dark Knight*

Nearly 25 years since the release of *Elektra*, things have come full circle, with

Bill currently helping on Neal Adams's series *Batman: Odyssey*

BACK TO COMICS

"I'm inking some of Neal's stuff because it's fun. Our styles are so radically different now," he says. "I understand how he sees form, how physics work in his world and how he renders his choices, because I spent



NEW MUTANTS

Bill's brilliant cover and internal work on *The New Mutants* in 1981 included plenty of mixed media elements, foreshadowing the styles he's more famous for



BIG DADDY

A recent rendering of the *Stray Toasters* villain, *Big Daddy*. Bill used the hard-hitting mini-series to make a range of observations about society.

years and years and years dissecting it and absorbing it!"

Exploring other ventures seems to have reinvigorated Bill's interest in working in comics. "I've come back to the point where I love comics as an art form in and of themselves, and I feel that in a lot of respects they're unique. They needn't be the sister, brother or relative of theatre, film or anything else. Let comics be comics," he says.

With typical inventiveness, he's now working on a Western story with the grit of Sergio Leone's films and the dreaminess of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. It's a way off, but the project has him in positive mood. "I'm doing all this other stuff, but man, I'm champing at the bit to do something that I don't have to worry about whether 200,000 people are going to get it or two million people are going to get it. I'd settle for 20 or 200 people. Having a good conversation with a smaller group of people – that's more rewarding and you're all kind of on the same page." ■

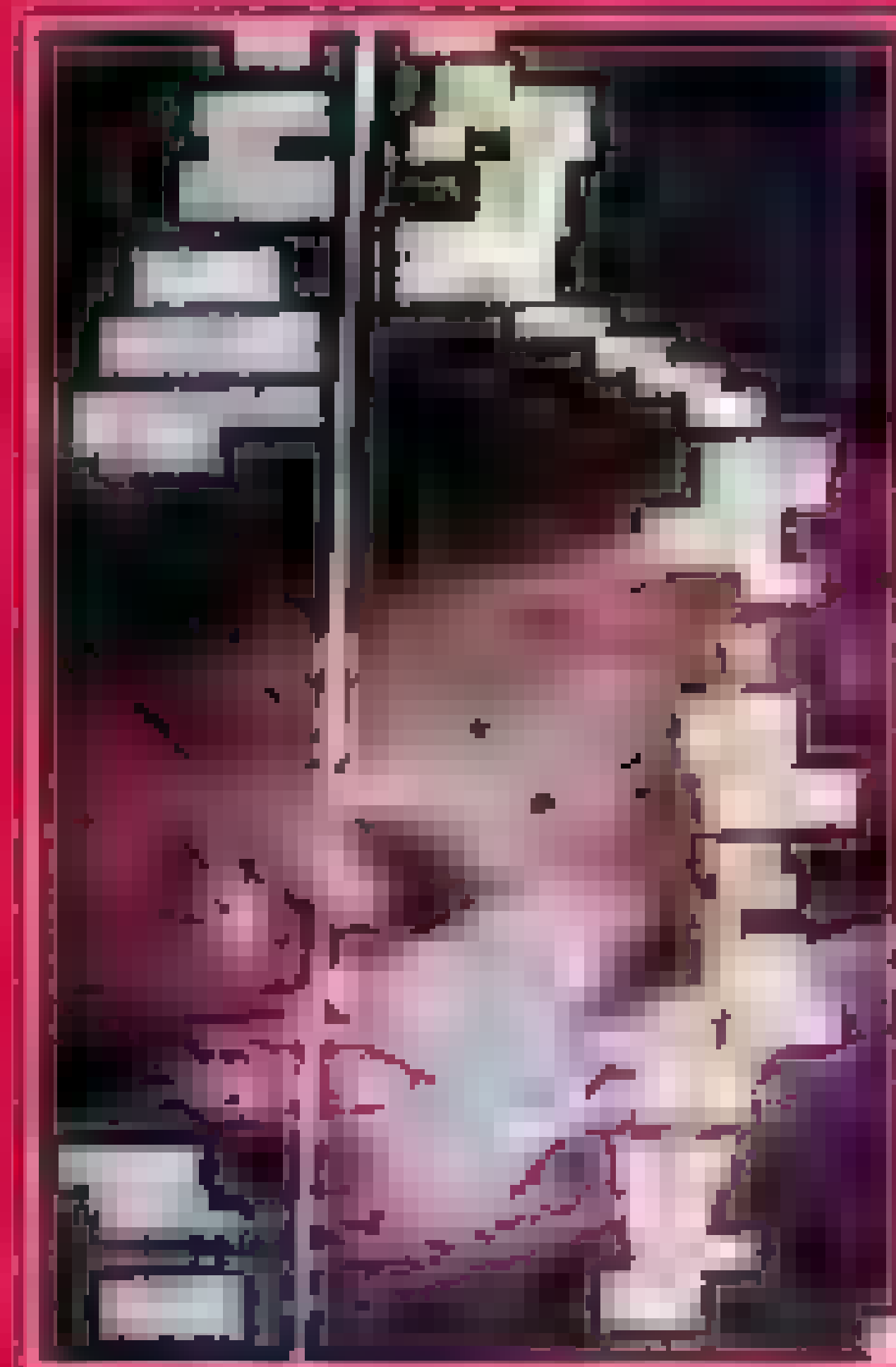
STRAY TOASTERS

BILL SIENKIEWICZ



STRAY TOASTERS

The cover from the 2004 reprint of *Stray Toasters*. It originally appeared in a mini-series and later a graphic novel in 1993 published by the Marvel imprint Epic.



INTRODUCING STRAY TOASTERS

Could there be a movie based on Bill's fantastic graphic novel?

Bill Sienkiewicz's *Stray Toasters* is a fantastic graphic novel that has been a favorite of mine for years. It's a story about a man who is a toaster and a woman who is a toaster. They are in a dark, industrial setting. The man is holding a small, glowing object. In the foreground, there are two toasters on a table. The background is filled with mechanical parts and wires. The story is a love story between a man and a woman who are toasters. It's a story about love, loss, and the power of the imagination. It's a story that has inspired me to create my own work. I hope that one day, *Stray Toasters* will be adapted into a movie. It's a story that deserves to be seen on the big screen.

Sketchbook

SUPERMAN REDESIGNED

Jim spent time breaking down Superman's design into component parts before reassembling him into a new vision for the character. His is a sharper, darker version of DC's most famous character, drawn for JLA-Z issue 3.

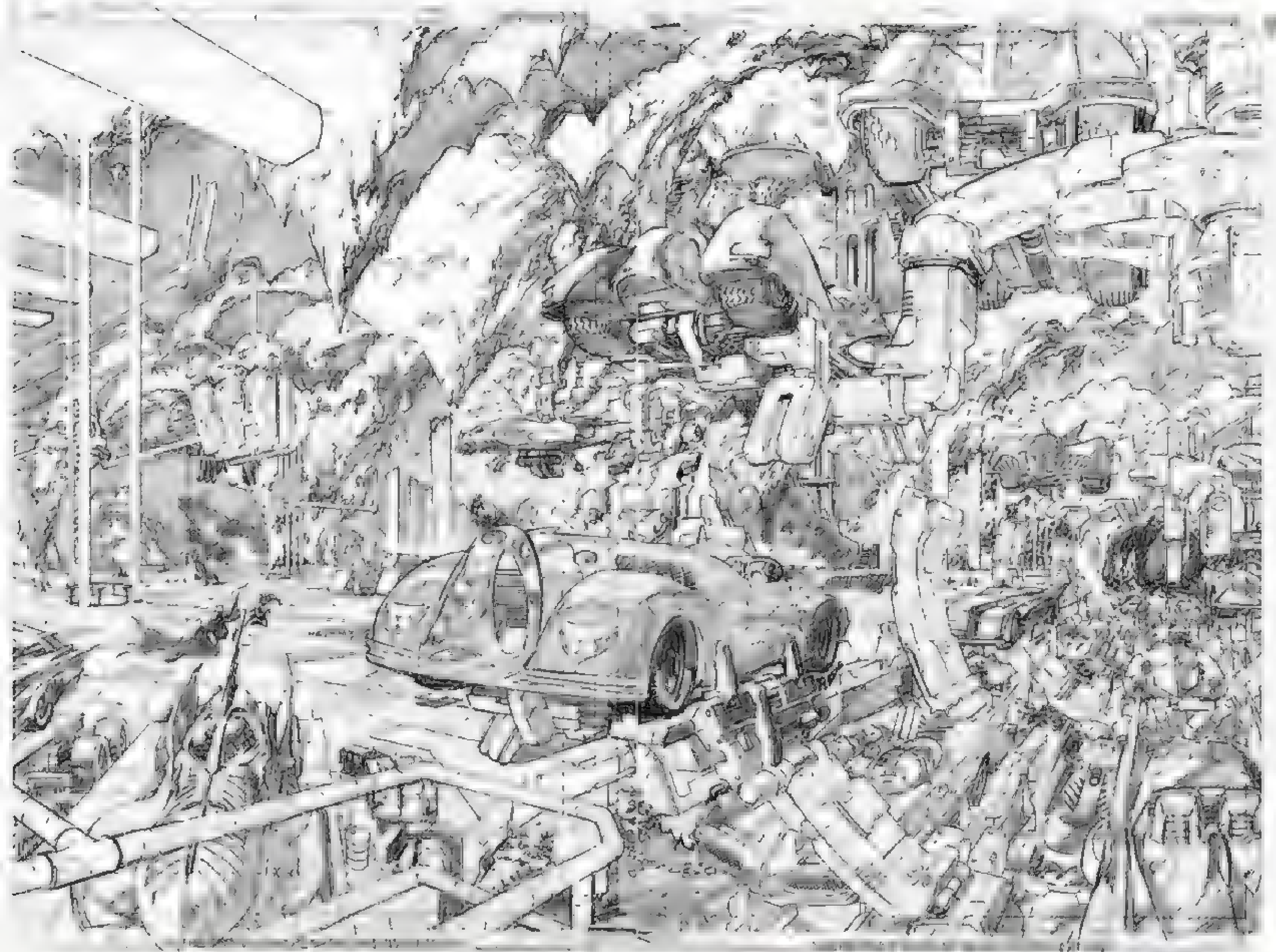
Jim Lee

Drawn by one of comics' most natural storytellers, these sketches are a source of inspiration for any comic fan.



Born in South Korea in 1964, Jim Lee moved to St. Louis, Missouri when he was four. At school he excelled in art, but when he left he went to Princeton to study medicine. Just as he was about to graduate with a degree in psychology, Jim took an art class and fell back in love with drawing. He put his medical career on hold and gave himself a year to make it as a comic artist. After a chance meeting with Archie Goodwin at the New York Comic-Con, he was signed to Marvel.

From there, Jim's career took off, first on new comic Alpha Flight, then moving on to illustrate Marvel's flagship series Uncanny



BATCAVE

This detailed spread shows the many different Batmobiles used over the years, and was featured in *Batman: Hush*, released in July 2003.

"He's the nicest guy in the whole world, and there's no better artist than Jim Lee"

X-Men, a mere three years after chancing his hand in the industry.

Looking for a new challenge, Jim left Marvel in 1992 with six other high-profile Marvel artists and formed WildStorm comics. This was a new imprint that touched on familiar mutant territory but pushed comics into a new, mature direction in premiere series WildC.A.T.s.

Soon, the idea of running his own studio clashed with Jim's creative urges and,

wanting to get back to the daily challenge of drawing comics, he sold WildStorm to DC. There, he worked on three groundbreaking series – *Batman: Hush*, *Superman: For Tomorrow* and *All Star Batman & Robin* – which redrew DC's most famous characters for a new generation.

While at DC, Jim even managed to entice Stan Lee to be publisher. Working on *Just Imagine Stan Lee With Jim Lee Creating Wonder Woman*, the pair set about

redesigning some of DC's most cherished characters, seemingly for fun. "He's the nicest guy in the whole world, and there's no better artist than Jim Lee," commented Stan Lee at the time. "What a joy he was to work with."

Since February 2010 Jim has been DC's co-publisher, and has overseen the launch of *Dark Knight: Boy Wonder*, as well as setting in motion a host of new comics for the coming years.

Sketchbook

BATMAN: HUSH

The pencil outline of page five from *Batman: Hush* was returned to the drafting board because of the writer attached, Joseph Loeb. Getting the chance to work with a writer like Japh Loeb, who I'd say is arguably one of the best Batman writers of the past 10 years, well, it's something you just don't get to do every day, he says.



Illustration by [illegible] for the publication of the copyright owner.

← SPLATTER INK AS WATER SPARKS ON OVERLAY BOARD "A" W/4

Sketchbook Jim Lee

COODIN
SKY

SUPERMAN

Unlike other marquee comic artists, Jim doesn't mind the colourists messing with the line art. "He pretty much lets me do what I need to do or what I think will work best," says Alex Sinclair. "And that, I think, above everything else, is what makes working with Jim a lot of fun."

Sketchbook

WILDC.A.T.S

When Jim set up WildStorm, he created the WildC.A.T.s series and universe. This cover sketch shows two of the comic's favourite characters, Voodoo and Grifter.



"Batman has the best rogues' gallery in comic books. The villains are more fun to draw than the main character himself"



THE JOKER

"Batman has the best rogues' gallery in comic books bar none. In some ways, the villains are more fun to draw than the main character himself," says Jim. This version of the Joker was done in pencil, ink, ink wash, watercolours and correct on fluid on art board.

MAN OF TOMORROW

These thumbnails show Jim's early layouts for Superman 2011, the issue that began the For Tomorrow storyline and DC's reinvention of Superman.



LANTERNS AND ARROWS

Two of DC's most cherished characters, Green Lantern and Green Arrow, look powerful and relevant in Jim's hands. This was done with pencils, inks, ink wash, markers and correction fluid on art board.

FOR MIKE!
(IN APRIL)

March 2011 **ImagineFX**

Development sheet

PROJECT TITLE: WAR BIKE

Wanting to test himself, **Tim Anderson** began a personal project to design a motorbike for a video game franchise, using bulky shapes and worn textures...

Artist PROFILE

Tim Anderson



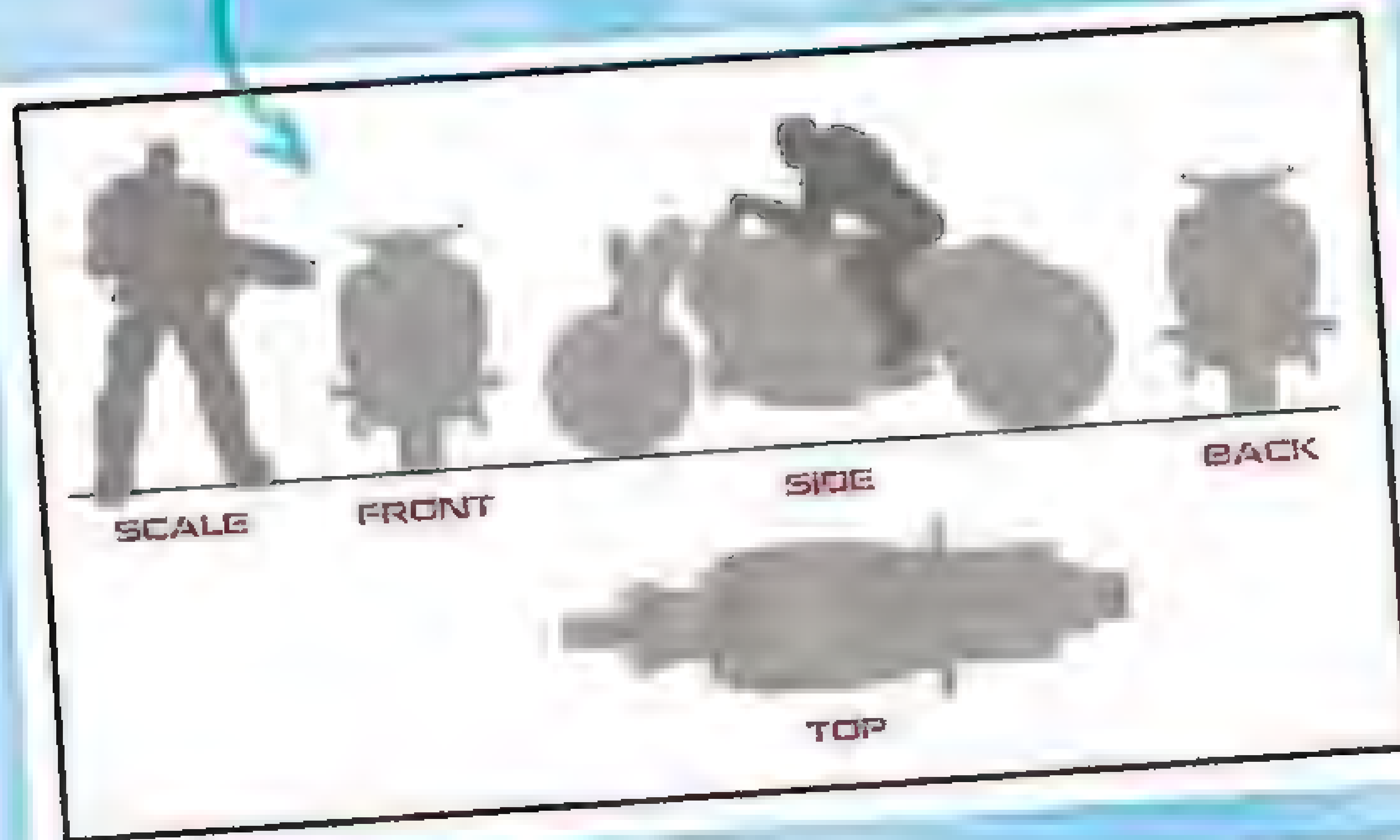
Professional artist Tim works as a concept designer and illustrator. He's based in the US and over the years has worked in various areas of the entertainment industry, including theme parks, video games, comics and films. This image is a good example of his skills, and you can see more in his online portfolio, www.timothyandersonart.com



Robert Thomas

3D artist, I did a basic model with Google SketchUp.

will work in all three dimensions.



Agents for the new how to break to the...
The first one and they provide refer...
The first one and they provide refer...
The first one and they provide refer...



Three-quarter view to use as an underlay for my final painting, and then use various photos and custom...
you'd find on a vehicle in the game's universe.



SEND US YOUR CONCEPTS!

Are you working on a project or doodling your own development sketches that you'd like to share with us?

LET US KNOW! Email your WIPs and final images to: develop@imaginetfx.com

COVERING DC

What makes a great comic cover? Some of DC's legendary artists ponder the question as we explore 75 years of DC's iconic covers...

Comic covers have the ability to capture the imagination, grab attention and even change lives. None more so than DC's 75 years of industry-changing comic covers, from Action Comic's #1 that introduced the world to Superman and gave life the comics industry as we know it; to its spiritual successor Superman #75 that succeeded in getting people talking about comics again, breathing life into a flagging genre with the headline-making Death of Superman. Comic covers can shape and reshape how we see our heroes.



SUPER READ
Learn more about DC in 75 Years of DC Comics, published by Taschen (www.taschen.com)



I THINK THAT, IN COMICS, STYLISATION IS GREATER THAN MASTER ILLUSTRATION

Bob Kane

always changing to fit the expectations of a new generation.

Looking back over 75 years of DC Comics' covers it's clear that trends change, but also the art of creating a comic cover has become more varied and technical. Many of the Golden Age artists, such as Bob Kane, Joe Shuster and Creig Flessel, who created covers for DC's namesake Detective Comics, placed storytelling ahead of artistic merit

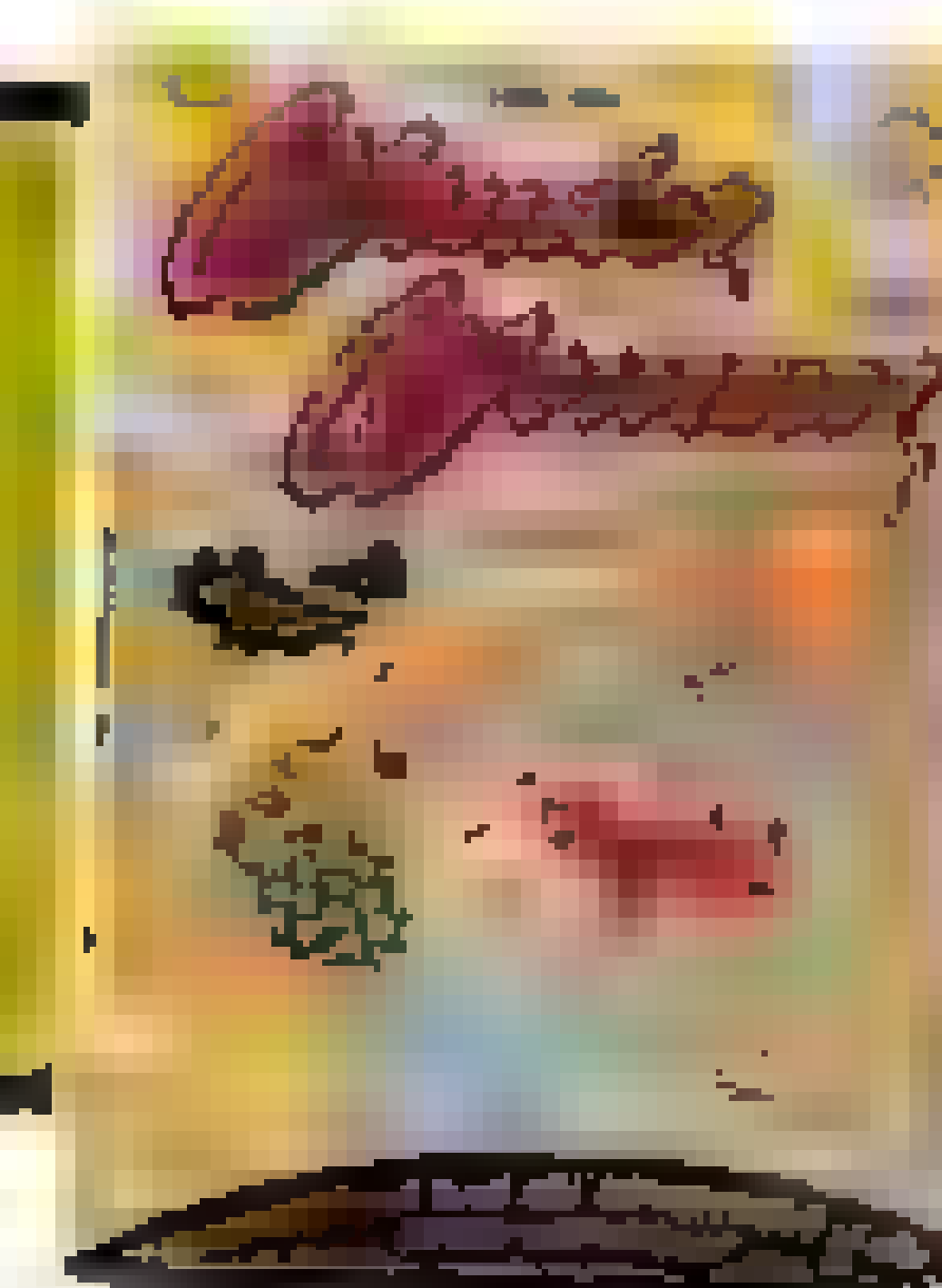
Flash Comics

Sheldon Shelly Modest was a young New York artist discovered by American Comics publisher M.C. Gaines. "We were competing with the newspaper," Shelly told an interviewer in 2000. "When Gaines picked up the Sunday newspaper, he saw Flash Gordon Prince Valiant and Terry and the Pirates. When he picked up a comic book, there was a tremendous difference in quality of the art. And then all of a sudden, he saw me. A fan of the highly detailed Flash Gordon creator Alex Raymond, Sheldon brought incredible artistic leaning to the Flash comics in the early years, especially the cover illustrations that often hid the interior art's campy nature.

GOLDEN AGE
1938 - 1956

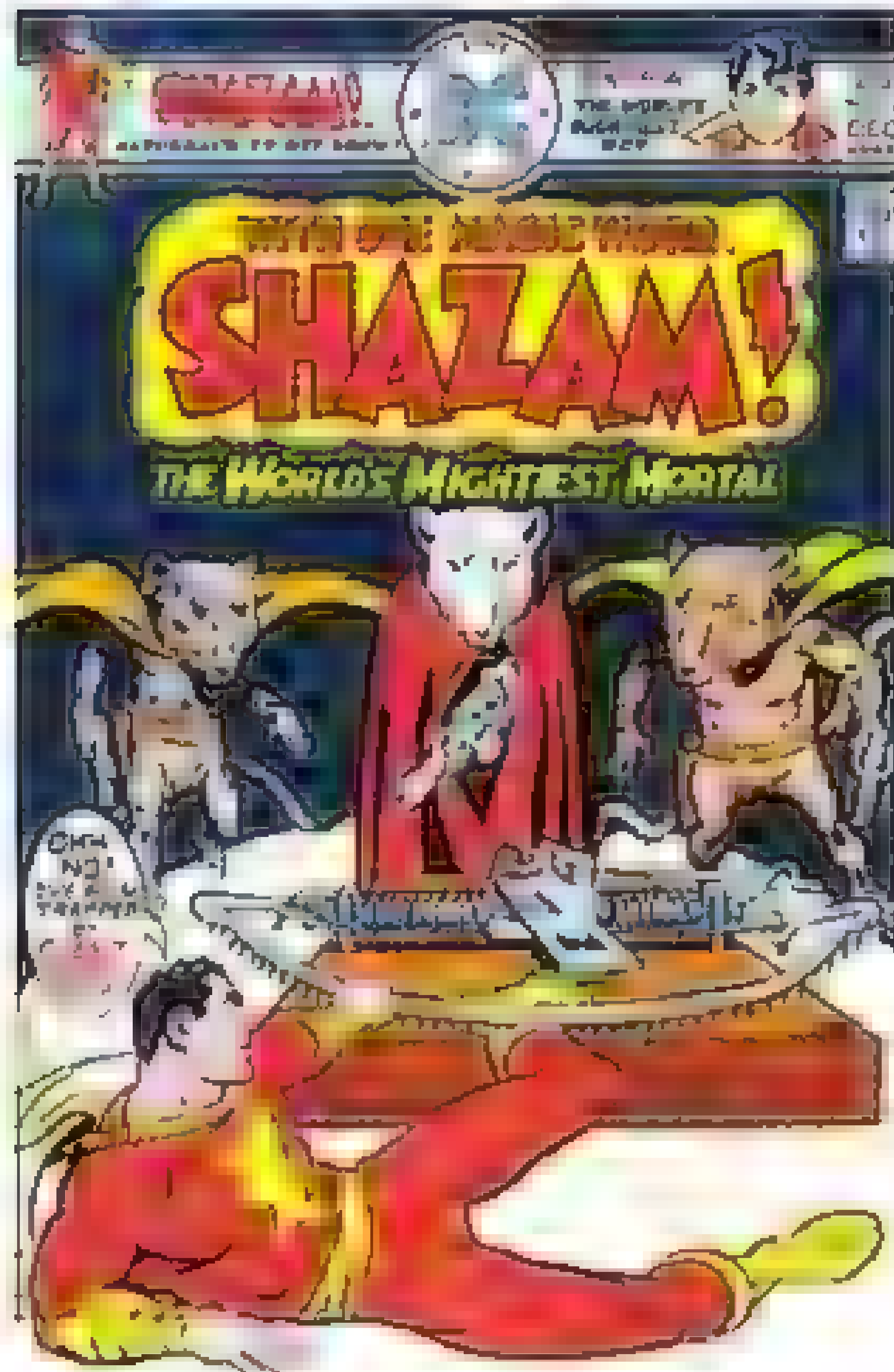


DEB
Bob Kane's Batman



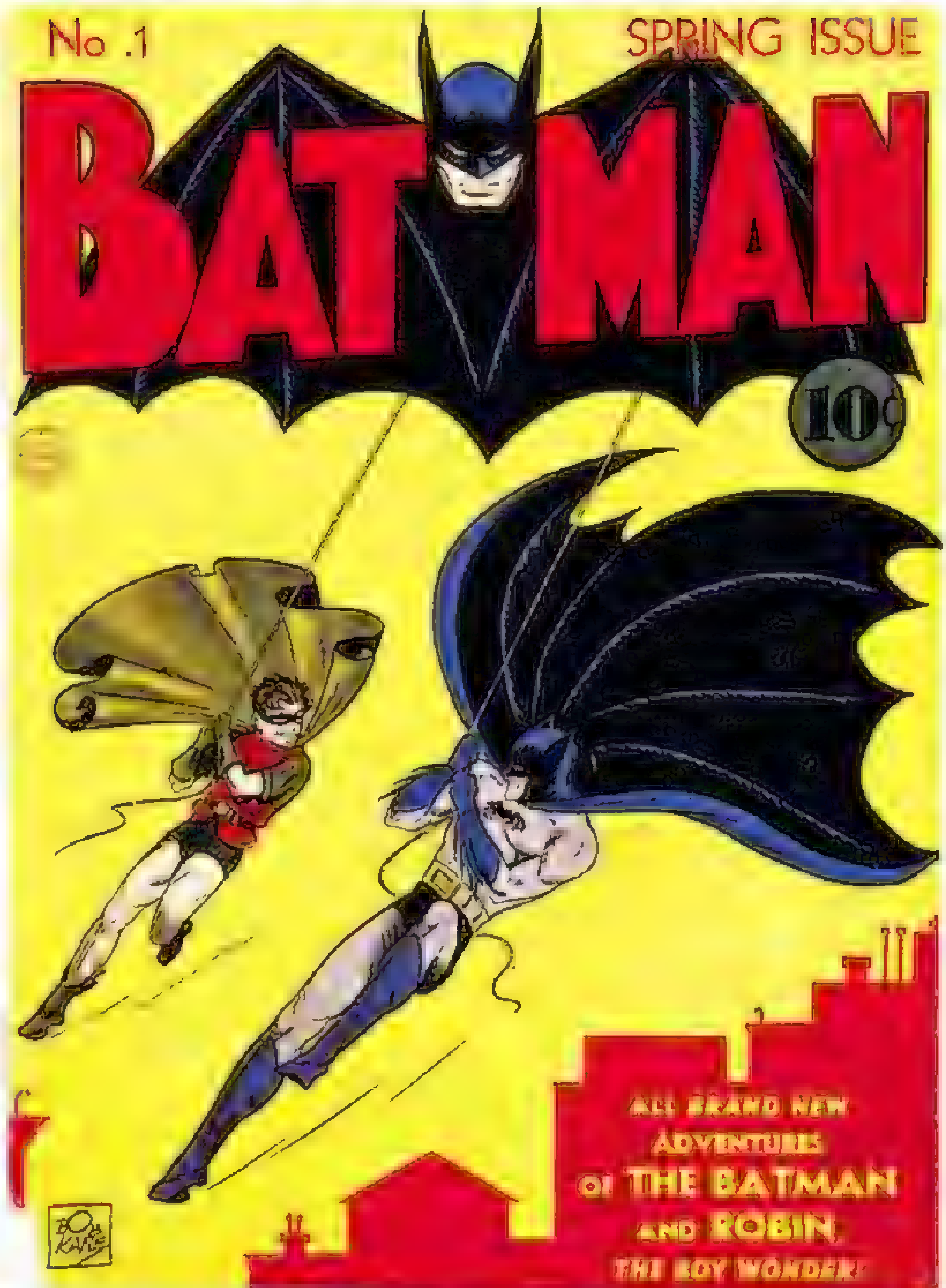
Batman #1 (1940)

Bob Kane squirmed as saying "it's the only day that in my mind, my talent is greater than my illustration." The creator of Batman was noted for not having great knowledge of classical theory, anatomy or perspective, but he more than made up for it through improvisation and a natural talent for storytelling. Interestingly, Batman #1 was the first and last time Batman came with intent. One series of panels has him gunning down fleeing criminals from the Bat-plane's cockpit, joined each by a



Shazam!

In the mid-30s, Superman did as much fighting in copyright courts as he did in the pages of Action Comics. Things came to a head with Fawcett Comics' Captain Marvel—who had overtaken Superman in sales—when DC took the Big Cheese to court, resulting in DC taking ownership of the character. It took 20 years for DC to resurrect Superman's rival, when in 1973 Captain Marvel returned with his strips and a list of C.C. Beck on cover dates. Called Shazam! because Marvel Comics now owned the name, it was hidey, it was here, especially after C.C. was taken out after being sued. However, the character remains a cult favourite.

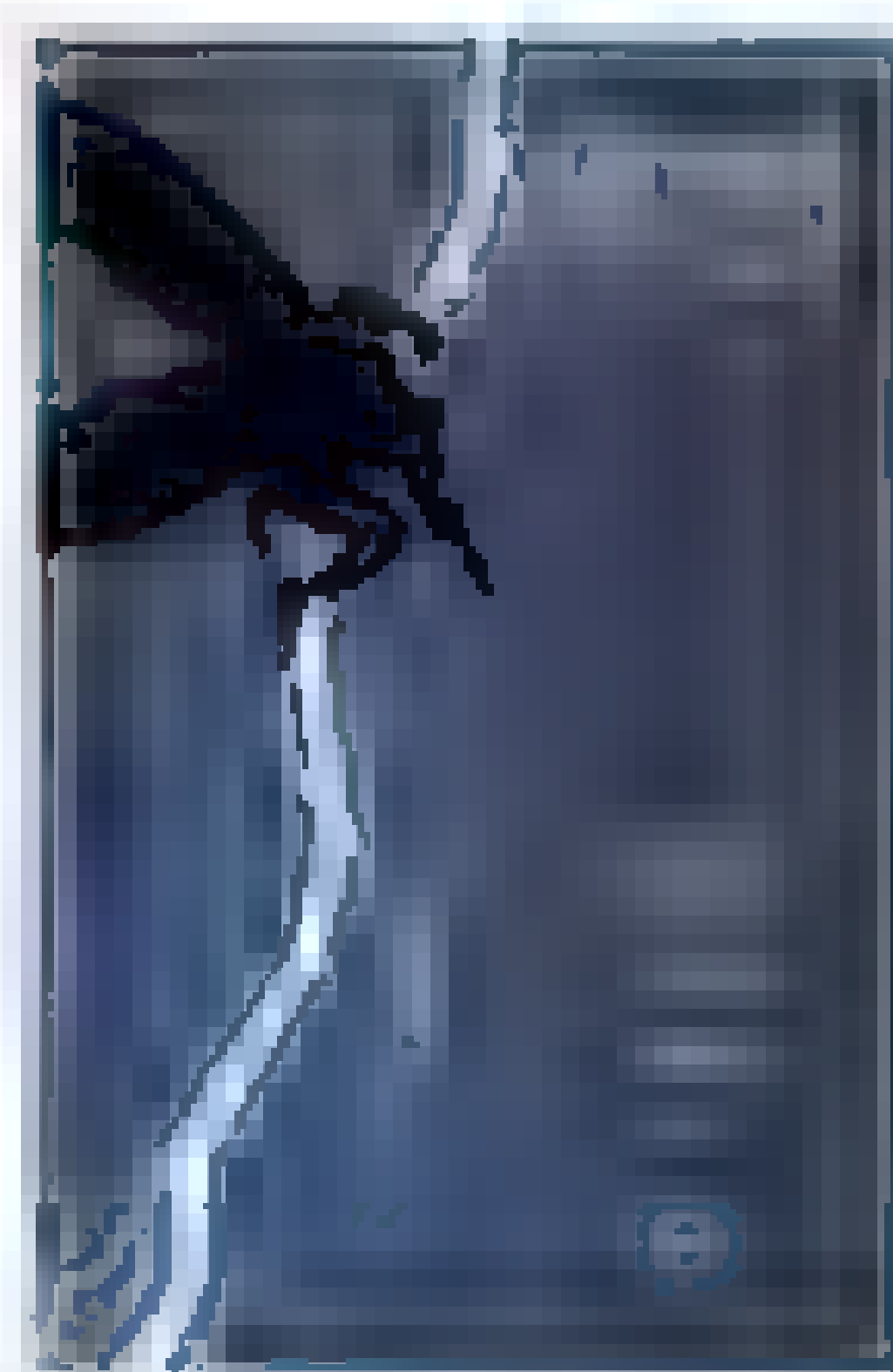


Then came the Silver Age innovators, such as Jack Kirby, Neal Adams and Steve Ditko, who pulled apart the composition of cover design, broke the fourth wall and created lively, punchy covers, although the



first rule always remained the same: sell the story. "It featured the title 'Robin Dies at Dawn' and showed Batman carrying a lifeless Robin,"

says Dan Jurgens, the artist on the iconic Death of Superman cover from 1993, reminiscing about Batman #156, from



BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

Comics grew up when artists such as Frank Miller began a new era of mature, experimental art.

1963. "I remember seeing it at a friend's house, where it belonged to his older brother. I was totally captivated by the image and assumed it had the Single Greatest Story Ever Written inside."

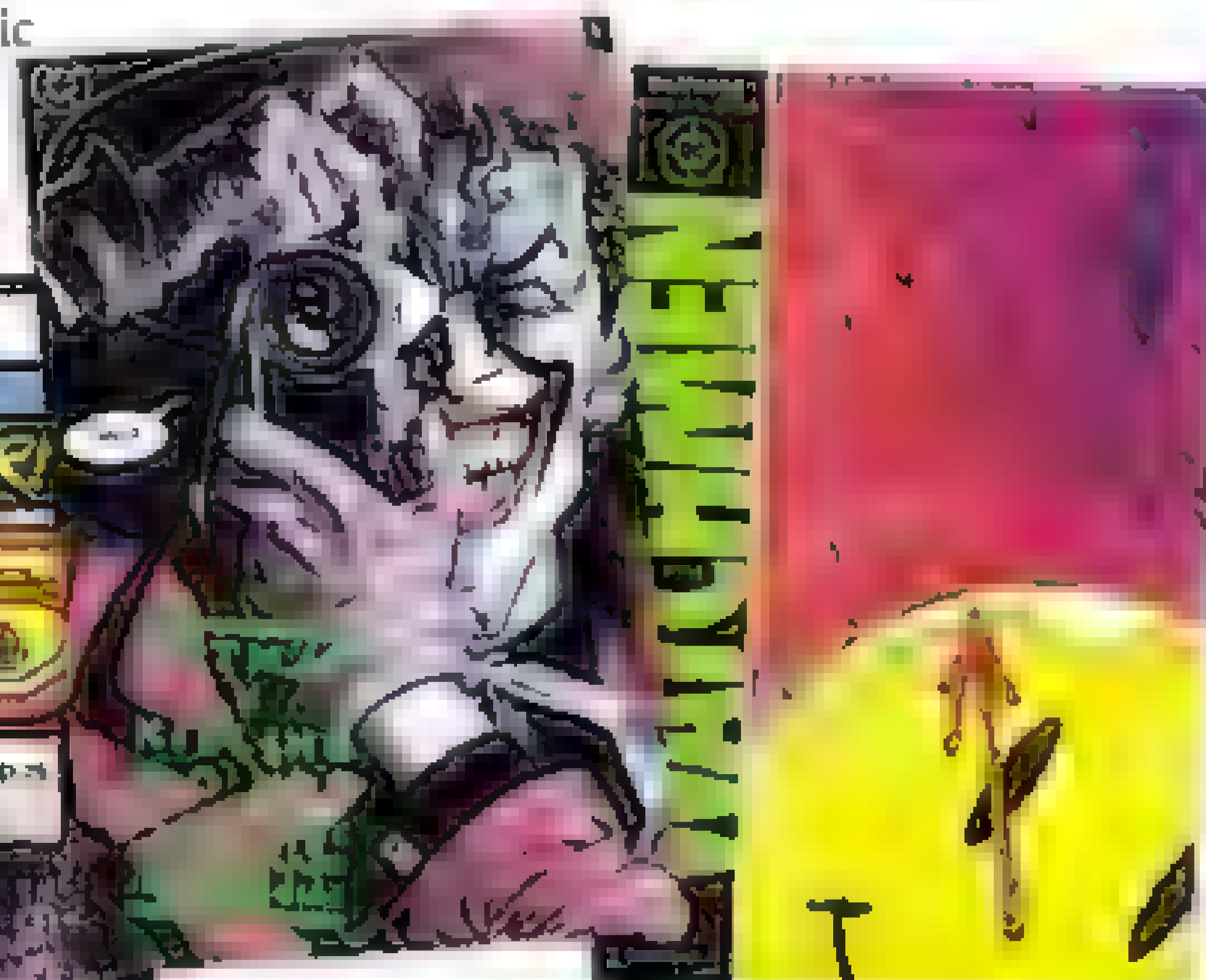
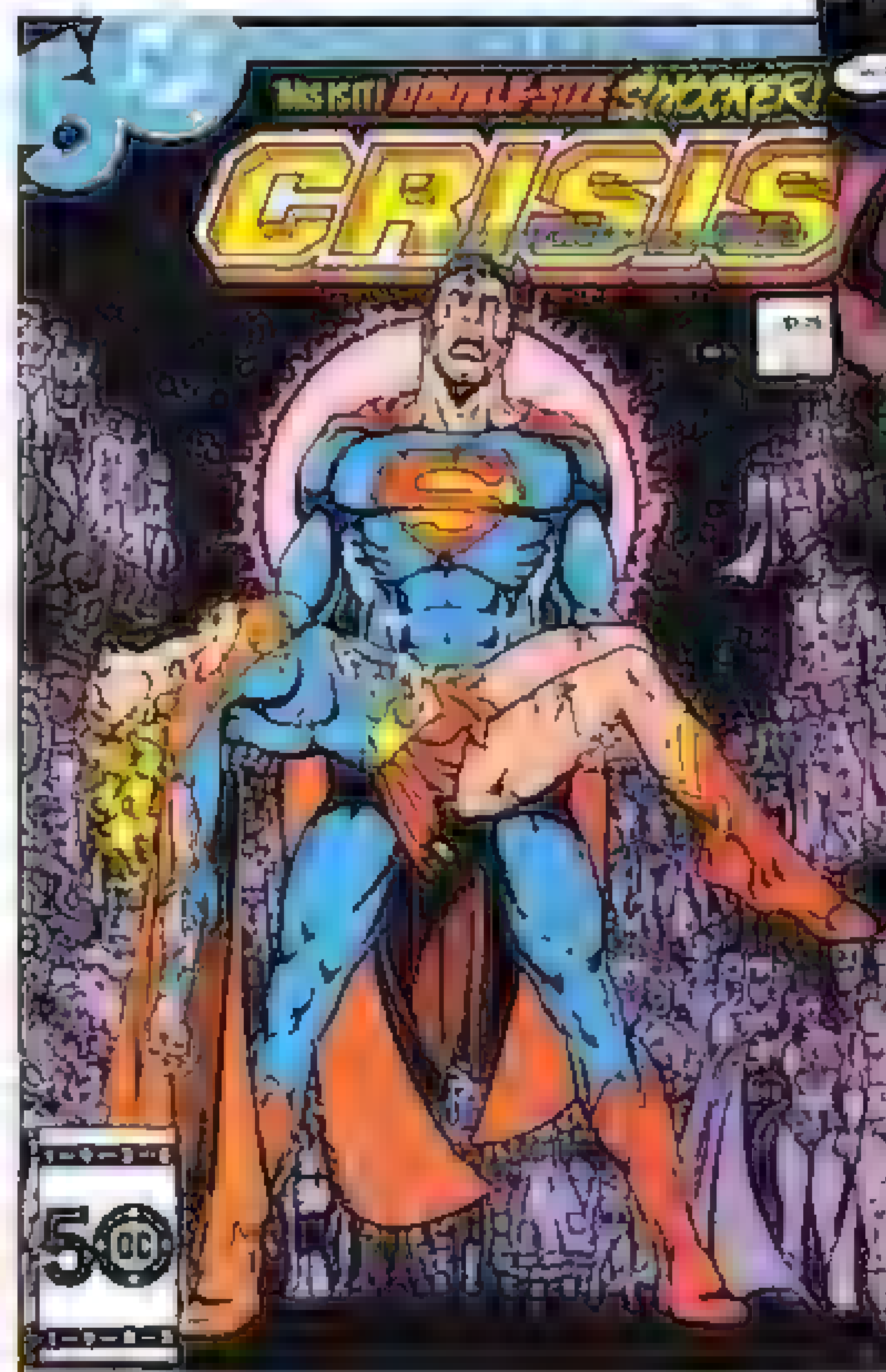
Another generation went further, pulling apart the very idea of what a comic cover should look like or be. Artists like Dave McKean, Frank Miller and Alex Ross use collage, oils, acrylics and graphic design techniques to create covers.

British artists Brian Bolland and Dave Gibbons had hits with *The Killing Joke* and *Watchmen*.



for a more literate market. "Painted covers and abstract art styles using mainly acrylics and oils started becoming popular from the

1980s onward," comments V for Vendetta artist David Lloyd. "Most were in books that were of a seriously moody, heavy, atmospheric nature, such as



Crisis on Infinite Earths

With comics leading off the new publishing era, editor-in-chief Jenette Kahn and vice-president Paul Levitz set about restructuring DC. High on the list was promoting talent and getting DC offering a royalty to artists and writers rather than the standard work-for-hire contract. He also the new limited series, and to a "change in the way we do business." One of the key titles was the 12-part *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, that reshaped the DC Universe and typified by George Pérez's sweeping Superman cover for issue seven. Cuthbert and Superman was inspired by Michael Lee Perry, not the first to do such a composition, but George's eagerness and extraordinary layout made it one of the covers of the decade.

Mister Miracle #5 (1971)

After leaving Marvel under a cloud, comic legend Jack Kirby found a home at DC. He was commissioned to create a new, futuristic, new universe of characters called the Fourth World. One of which was Mister Miracle, a superhero with the knack of escaping from any situation. Although Kirby ran only 12 issues, the character remained a staple of the DC Universe. He was even Adam Hughes' first cover for DC, for Mister Miracle #19 (September, 1990). "I feel pressured," says Adam. "Your first cover feels like it's the only thing you're ever going to do for that company so you have a real 'it's A or Nothing' vibe."

MODERN COMIC COVERS ENCOURAGE ARTISTS TO BE MORE IMAGINATIVE AND LESS PROSAIC

Adam Hughes

SILVER AGE 1956-1970

1956
Flash returns in Showcase #4, ushering in the Silver Age.

Jack Adler's painted effect using wash tones is used on All-American Men of War #3.

1957
Jack Kirby creates the Challengers for DC, a prototype Fantastic Four.

1958
Kurt Schaffenberger draws the first issue of Superman's Girl Friend, Lois Lane.



Al Plastino and writer Otto Binder design the Legion of Super-Heroes.

1959
Artist Carmine Infantino is applauded

for his innovative covers on Flash.

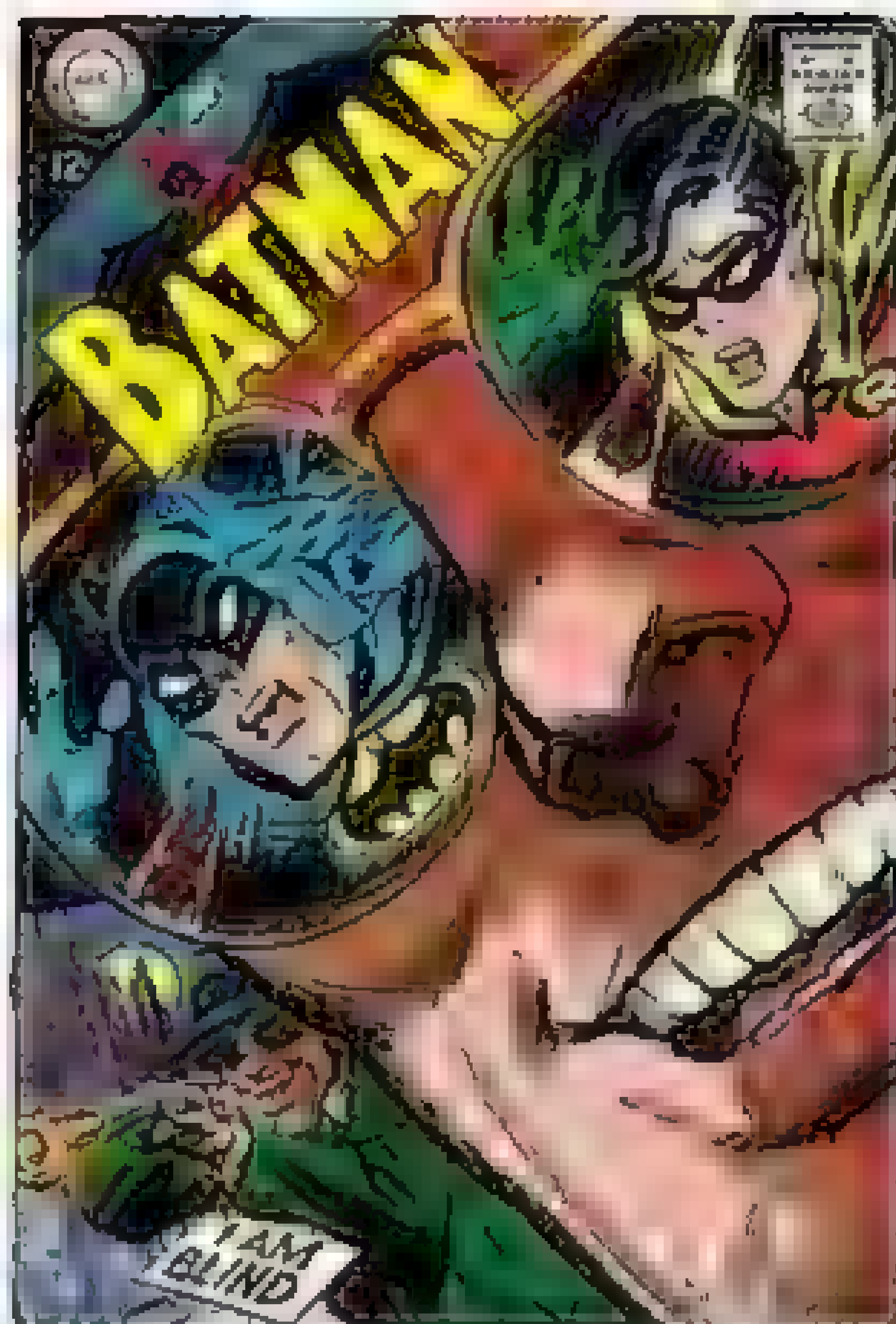
Jack Kirby quits DC and moves to Marvel.

1960
Captain Atom debuts, drawn by Steve Ditko.

1961
Flash #123 releases and changes comics forever with the idea of a parallel universe, called Earth-2, inhabited by Golden Age heroes. The cover is by Carmine Infantino.

Jack Kirby and Stan Lee create Fantastic Four at Marvel.

1962
Incredible Hulk and Spider-Man launch at Marvel, drawn by Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko.



Batman

Flagging sales of *Batman: The New Earth* led to a new era for the character. The *Batman* New Earth era was a behind-the-scenes symbol of his era. This era, from issue #12 to the first of the new era's replacement, in which, with pushed the new era's new style. The first of the new era's replacement, in which, with pushed the new era's new style. The first of the new era's replacement, in which, with pushed the new era's new style.

I ASSUMED IT HAD THE SINGLE GREATEST STORY EVER WRITTEN INSIDE 99

Dan Jurgens

Swamp Thing

(first series) # 34 (1985)

By the 1980s, DC had begun experimenting with new adult themes. The 1985 reworking of *Swamp Thing* by Alan Moore from a rocky monster movie to a horror novel was a perfect example of this. Matching Moore's words, penciller Stephen Bissette and painter John Totleben created a new style of art that defined the genre of traditional comics.



WHERE LEGENDS LIVE!

BY ALAN MOORE / STEPHEN BISSETTE AND JOHN TOTLEBEN

One of the only female artists of the Silver Age, Ron Frenz, drew *Metamorphosis* after 17 years on *Aquaman*.

1965
Murphy Anderson introduces a new sizing

of comic art to save money, forcing artists to simplify their style.

1966
John Ronan leaves DC to replace Steve Ditko as the artist on *Spider-Man*.

1967
Neal Adams joins DC as a cover artist and brings a new, realistic style to the publisher.

1968
Steve Ditko returns to DC, creating *The*

Creep, and *Dark* and the *Dove*.

Neal Adams draws his first *Batman* story. He'll stay for decades.

R. Crumb and Robert Williams usher in the



adult comic genre.

Artists Mike Sekowsky and Dick Giordano redesign *Wonder Woman* as a mod.

1969
Green Arrow becomes

a left-wing activist in Neal Adams' redesign.

The black superhero Jericho is deemed too inflammatory for the Southern American states and is altered by Neal Adams.





“THEY WANTED
ROUGH SKETCHES
BEFORE I WENT
AHEAD, BUT AFTER
THAT I'D BE LEFT
ALONE BECAUSE
THEY TRUSTED ME”
David Lloyd



V For Vendetta

From the creators of Watchmen, Alan Moore and the costumed anarchist V, who waged war against a near-future fascist English government. Inspired by political ideology and historical life events, V For Vendetta adopted a new kind of art style. Artist David Lloyd provided the painterly, abstract cover art that defined the series, as well as creating the character-defining mask, which was a reference to Guy Fawkes.

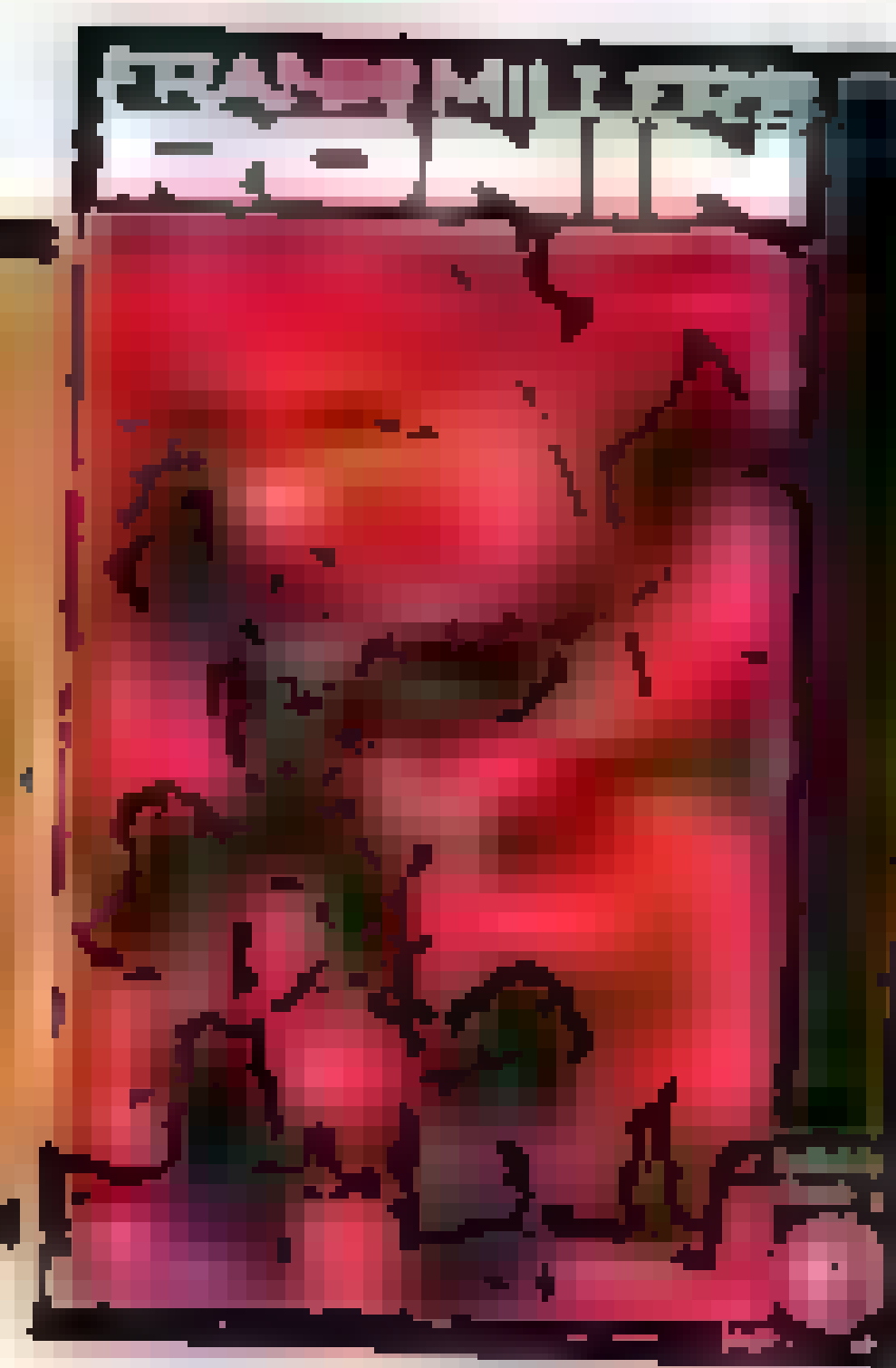
“They wanted rough sketches of some designs before I went ahead, but after that, I built it alone because they trusted me,” says David, who explains his process. A cover design can be born from a scene or that from a scene from the book that could be made into a painting, and given their art composition strength and quality. They were the reflective of the most important element of each issue, though sometimes they were.”



BEFORE & AFTER

An early, rough pen sketch sets the composition for what would become the cover of V For Vendetta #9, continuing the series' unusual compositions.





➤ Hellblazer, Sandman and such, which were safe places to use them in because the readers of those books wouldn't be alienated by such work. It spoke to them in their language, as many of them were aware of, and admirers of, fine art and painting."

The current generation of DC's cover artists have taken the baton and run with it. Tim Sale, Darwyn Cook and James Jean create eye-catching, evocative 'poster'

covers that tend to sell the comic more than the story inside, mixing graphic design and traditional art with old-fashioned cartoonish expression.

"Nowadays, covers are advertising for the book they appear on; their sole purpose is

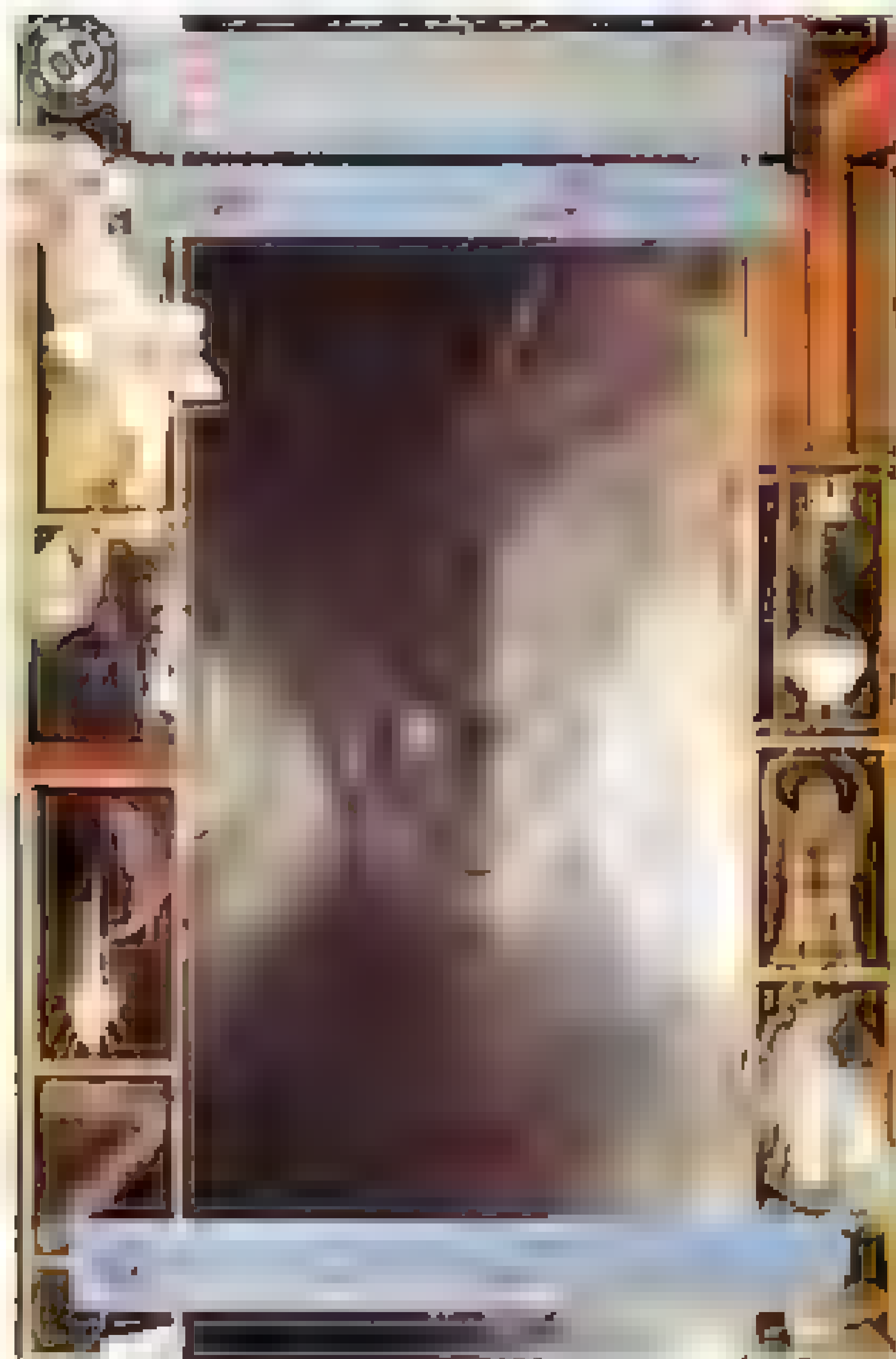


to get a potential reader to pick them up off a shelf," says Adam Hughes. "Because they need to be really eye-catching, modern comic

covers encourage artists to be more imaginative and less prosaic."

Despite a broader canvas of styles and influences to work from, comic covers still have the same function as they did 75 years ago: to make you pick up the book. However, artists are now challenged to do so in different, more imaginative ways.

A book published by
quirkbooks.com



The Sandman (second series) #1 (1989)

From the mid-1960s onwards painted and illustrated covers began to take their place away from more traditional comic book art. Though on the list of pioneers was Dave McKean, who drew from a run of painterly covers for Constantine: Hellblazer, went on to inspire DC's Golden Age Sandman character and his alter ego, Neil Gaiman. The first big take-over came with the idea of a portrait gallery exhibit. Every cover featured a wooden frame, burned and red inked with collage and paint, with the central figure of the Sandman seen on issue 1's cover was inspired by goth rocker Peter Murphy. "It was about a concept, the idea of dreaming said Dave. "The covers in the rown way should take the preconceptions of how a comic book looks out into the garden and set fire to them."



Detective Comics #626 (1991)

Michael Golden wasn't strictly a comic fan until he entered the industry. A career commercial artist, he fell into drawing comics in the late '70s after a client suggested that he send his work around. His background lends his covers such as this iconic image of Gotham's Dark Knight from 1991 which is a unique blend of realism and cartoonish expression. It's a testament to Batman's design that no matter who draws him, he's always readable. As DC artist Dan Jurgens explains, when designing a superhero you need something that is visually distinct and most importantly, unique to the character. Batman and Spider-Man are tremendous examples of this, whereas many other characters have costumes that are somewhat interchangeable.



BATGIRL

James Jean mixes old and new in his Batgirl #45 cover, featuring the original Silver Age costume with modern print techniques.

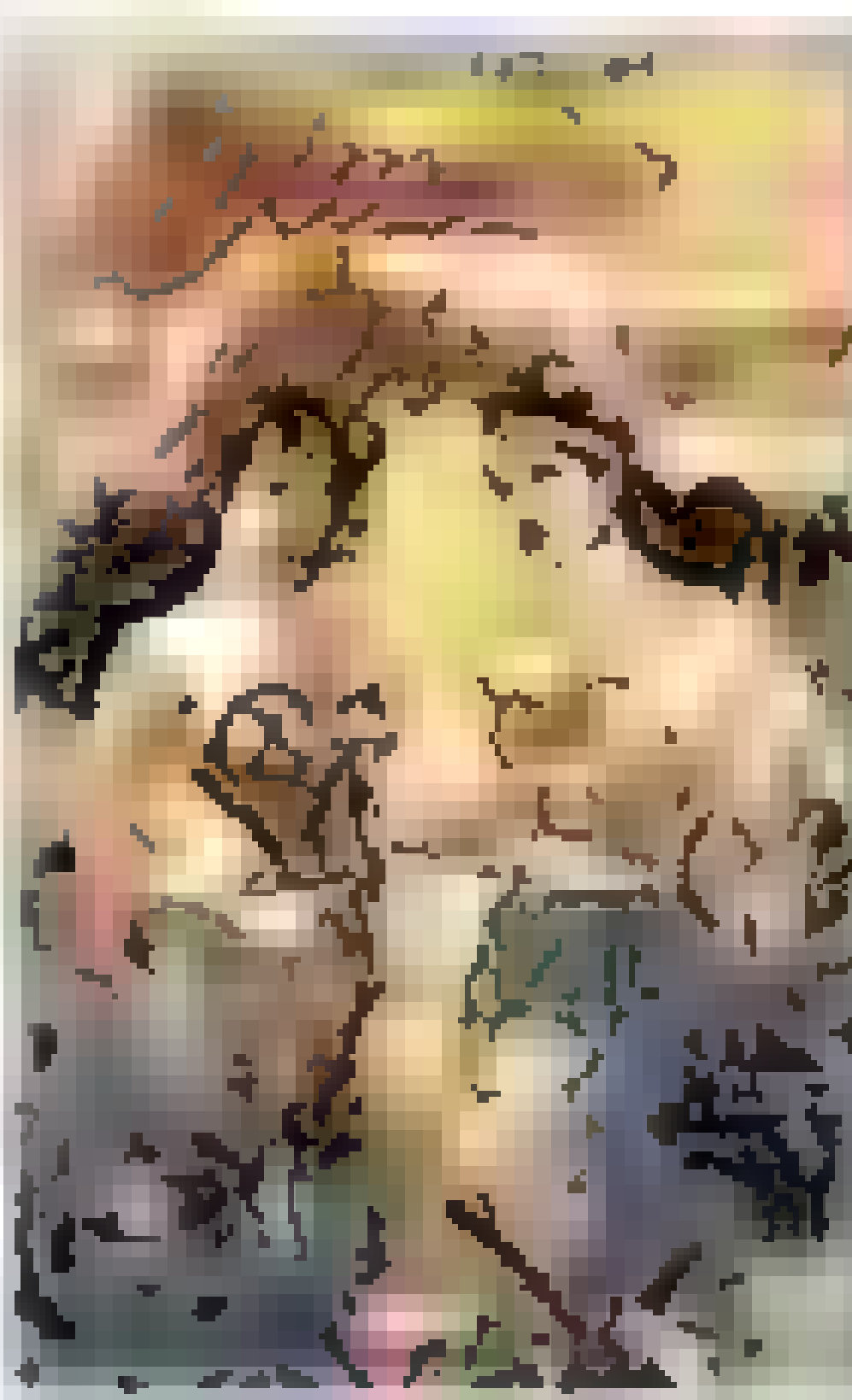


Wonder Woman (2nd series) #0 (1994)

Although an iconic character, Wonder Woman never hit the big time of Batman or Superman until Brian Bolland's restoration. Bolland took her as the character in 1992 and reimagined her as a modern superhero. A social heroine. Wanting a pin-up version of the Amazonian warrior, Bolland took inspiration from supermodels Christy Furlington and Stephanie Seymour when designing his Wonder Woman. As this cover from the second series, issue zero demonstrates. Naturally Adam Hughes is a fan. "He walks on the ground I worship" says the cover artist.

WONDER WOMAN

Issue 184 of Wonder Woman sees Adam Hughes's pin-up face of against her Golden Age self, a concept that even included the original Harry G. Peter logo.



Art Posé *Traditional*



Armand S Baltazar

LOCATION: US

WEB: www.armandbaltazar.com

EMAIL: armandbaltazar@hotmail.com

MEDIA: Liquitex, Cel-Vinyl animation paint and oil



Armand has always been interested in drawing, with early trips to the Art Institute of Chicago keeping his passion keen.

"When I went to the Art Center College of Design, I became inspired by masters like John Singer Sargent, John William Waterhouse, Joseph Clement Coll and Frank Frazetta, to name a few," he says. He then began a career in film with DreamWorks SKG Animation, as a background painter and visual development artist. "Later, I became an art director with Walt Disney Feature Animation," he tells us. "I'm currently a senior designer for Pixar Animation Studios, working on the Cars 2 project."





1 PIRATE GIRL

18x24 in. acrylic on paper

"This is a concept painting of the Pirate Girl for my story. It was inspired by the NC Wyeth and Dean Cornwell paintings of old. The girl had to be both striking and strong, I painted her as Milla Jovovich, whom I thought would've made a fantastic heroine. This was, of course, all before the Resident Evil films and Pirates of the Caribbean, and although she has qualified that role in The Fifth Element and in the Resident Evil films, she would've been an absolutely bad-ass Pirate Girl!"

2 PRINCE OF EGYPT

24x14.5 in. Liquitex and Cer-Vinyl paint on illustration board

"This is one of my favourite background paintings from Prince of Egypt - Moses returns to the palace. This painting is a fine example of the grand and sweeping epic that the film aspired to."

3 KATE STERLING

24x14 in. acrylic on paper

"This is a concept design for a fantasy adventure depicting the main villain engaged in final climactic battle with the hero of the story... a beautiful bad-ass pirate girl."

4 CRAB

24x10 in. charcoal on paper

"This is a concept design that I did for a fantasy adventure which featured pirates, secret fantastical islands, monstrous villains... and of course a giant crab that served as an underwater ferry to a lost city."



IMAGINEFX CRIT

"An obsession with bad-ass pirate girls aside, Armand's eye for movement and an epic setting ensure we're all captivated by his visions. I'd love to see more of his worlds."

Ian Dean,

Deputy Editor



Mattias Adolfsson

LOCATION: Sweden

WEB: mattiasa.blogspot.com

EMAIL: mattiasadolfsson@gmail.com

MEDIA: Ink and watercolour



"I quit working with games in 2007 and have been doing traditional illustrations since," says Mattias. He's worked with companies all over the world, mostly for print books and magazines but also on an English TV series last year. "I'll start producing a book with my drawings for publication in 2011," he says, "and I hope to be able to focus more on my own project - if I can muster up enough funds - and put more focus on print work."



1 WATCHMAN'S WARNING COMPLETE

Ink and watercolour

"This is a record sleeve for an American rock group, Watchman's Warning. At first I just did the left side of the image (the tower and the pigs), but as the sleeve was to be a fold-out, I elongated the image and gave the pigs something to be concerned about."

2 ROCKET

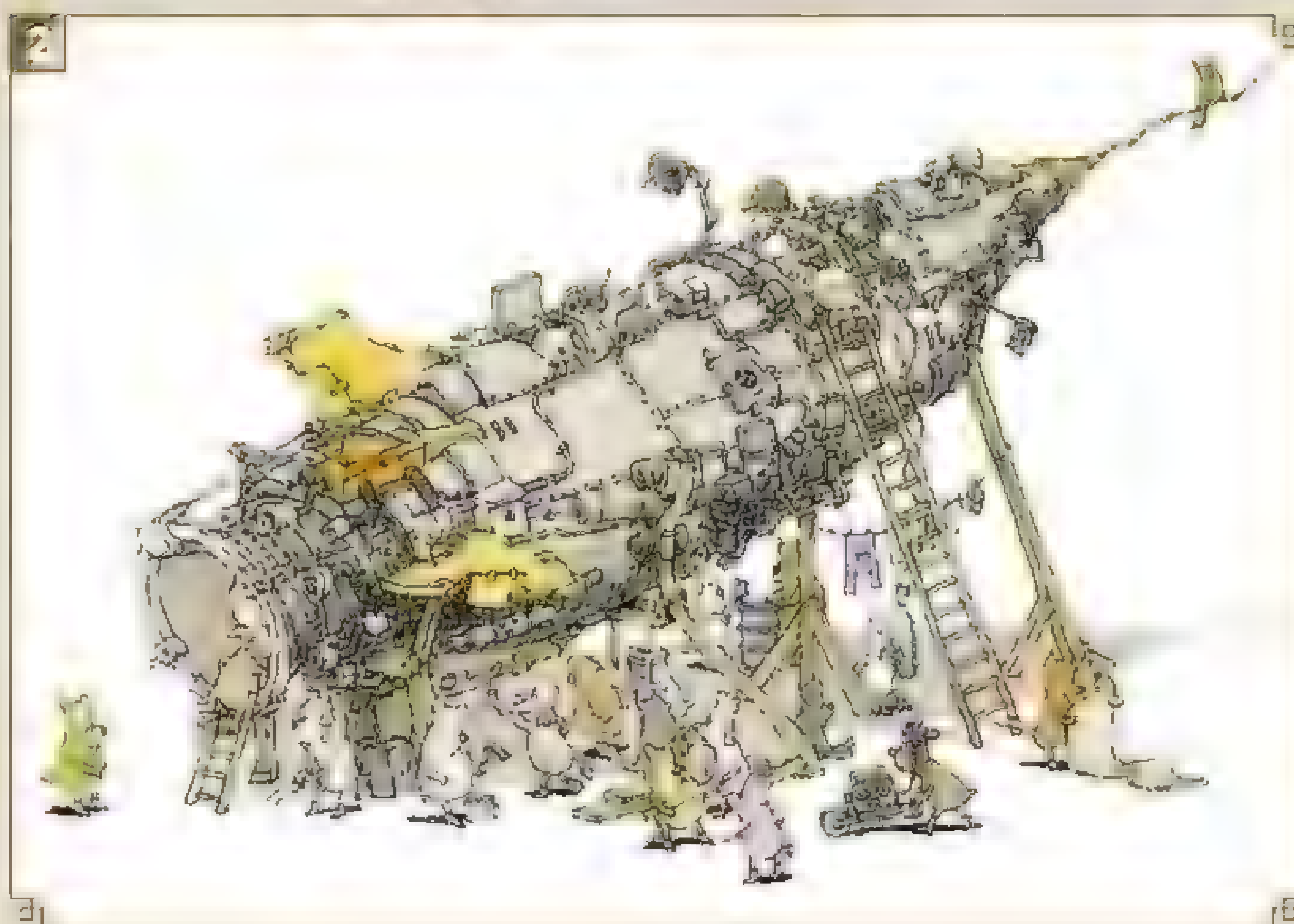
Ink and watercolour

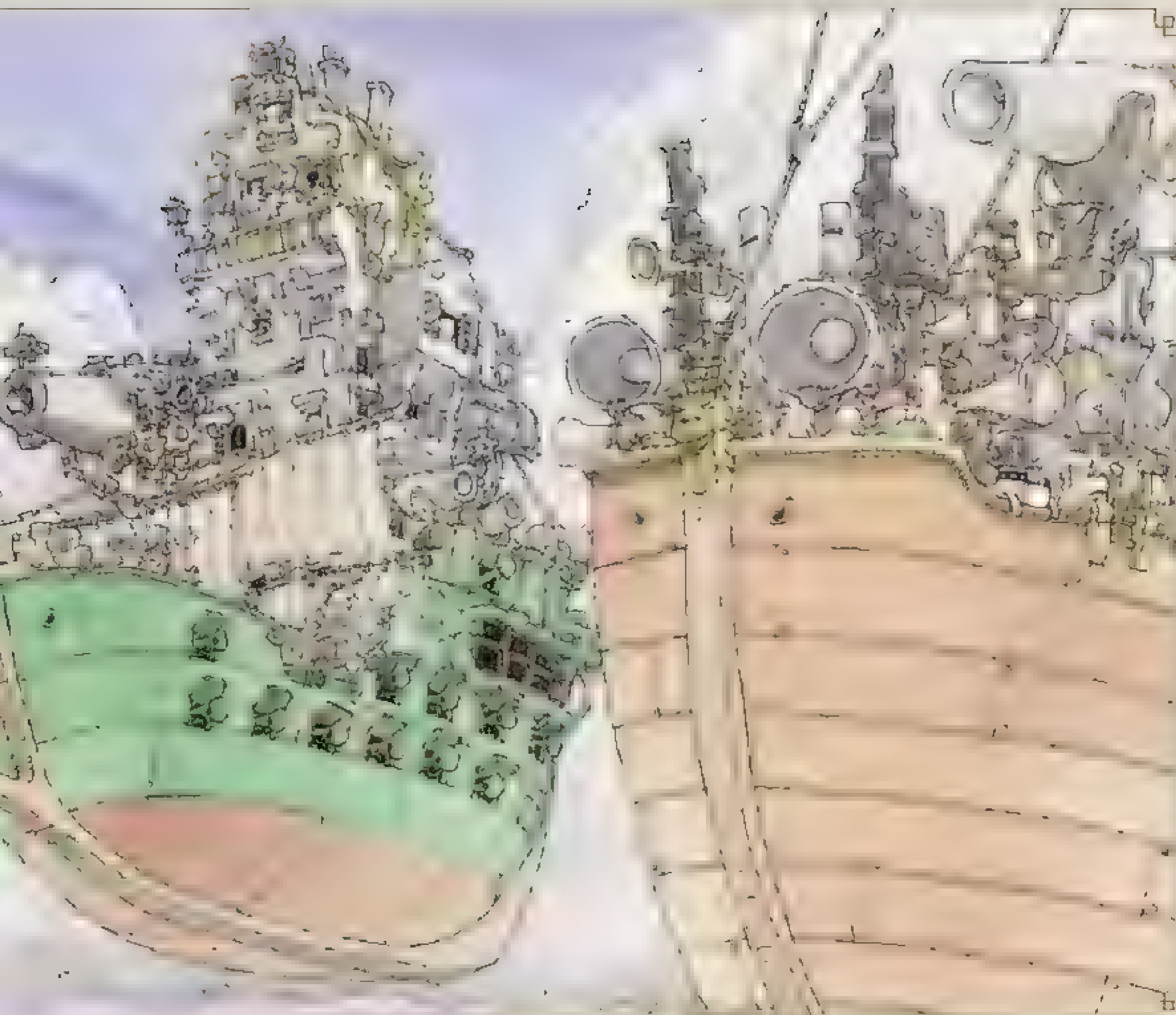
"This is part of a children's book sketch I work on when given time. It's supposed to revolve around a dog that finds his true love among the stars (or something on these lines)."

3 STUDIO

Ink on Moleskine

"Recreating my studio while in bed sick. I did this Moleskine spread while yearning for my studio - the fantasy one bears little resemblance to my real studio. This image will be used by Moleskine as a special-edition planner to come out sometime next year (some parts of the image had to be censored, though - maybe you can guess which)."



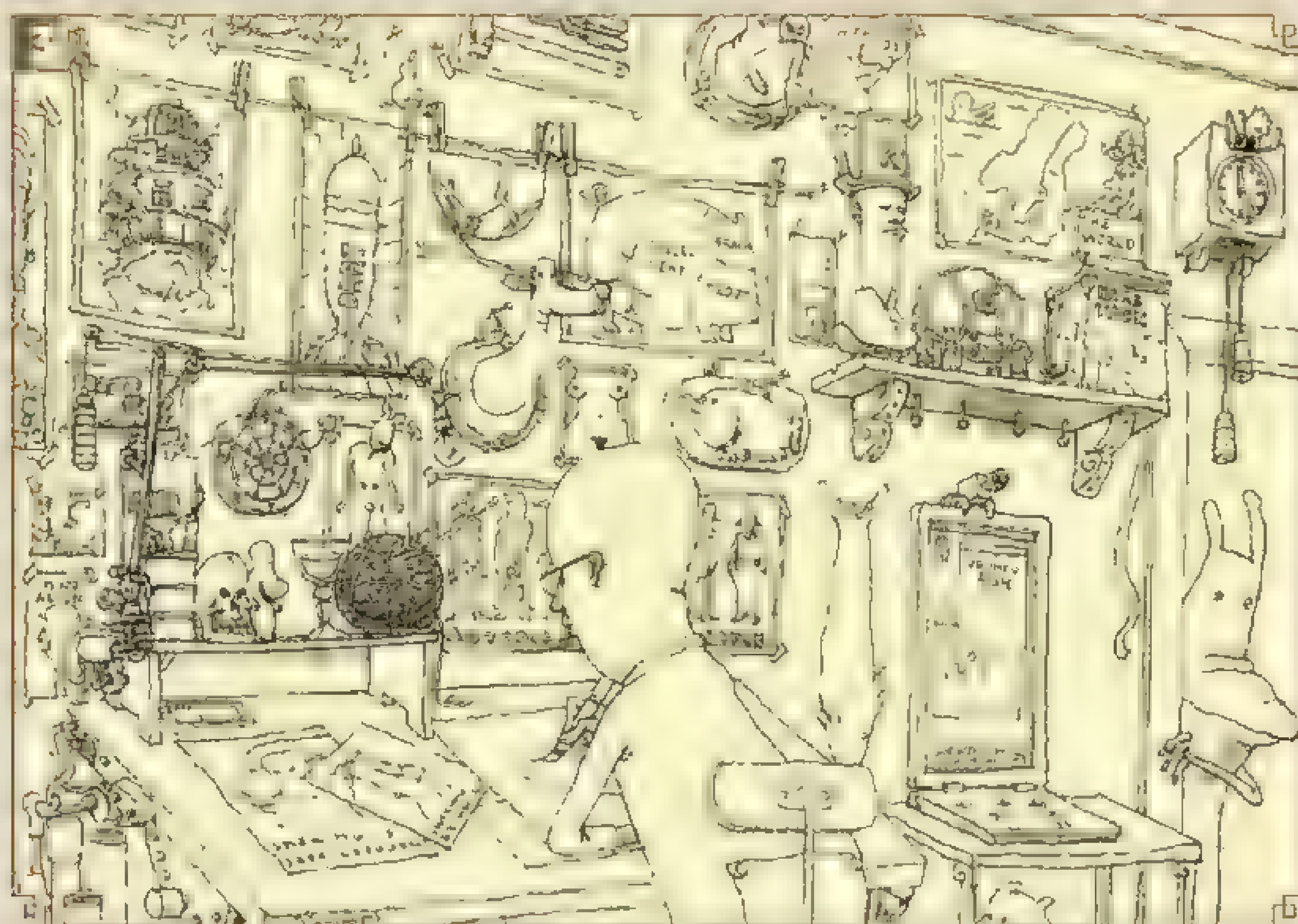


SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!


Want to see your traditional art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300dpi TIFF or JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically

You can also email submissions for FXPosé. Bear in mind that files must be no more than 5MB in total, or we won't receive them. fxpose@imaginefx.com

SEND YOUR ARTWORK TO:
FXPosé Traditional
ImagineFX
30 Monmouth St
Bath, BA1 2BW
UK



IMAGINEFX CRIT

 "Too often, children's picture books are filled with unimaginative imagery. Mattias's amazing art would enthrall younger readers – there's so much exciting detail on show."
 Cliff Hope,
 Operations Editor

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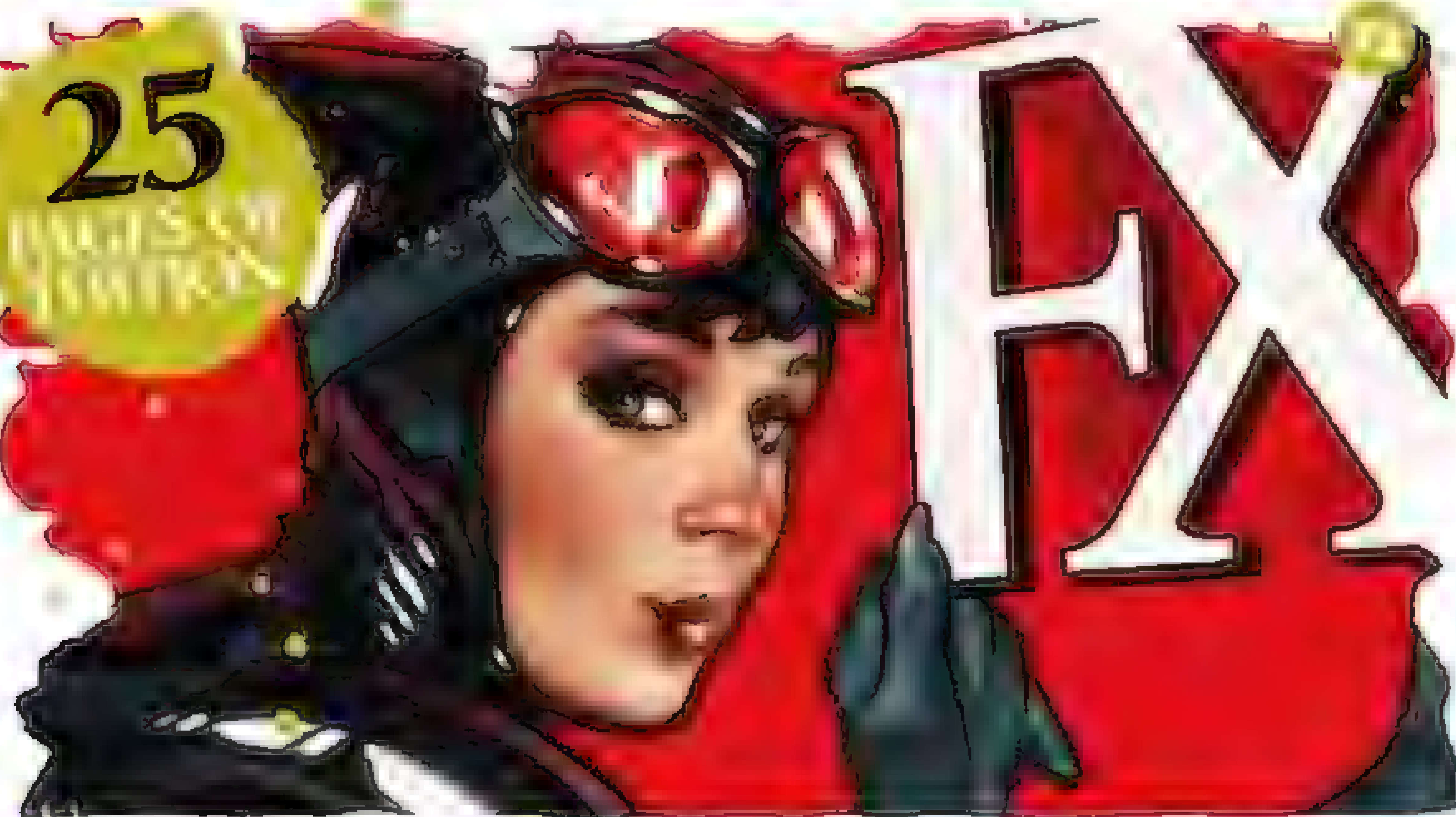
Where you see this badge you'll find an accompanying video workshop in the corresponding folder on your DVD.



Advice from the world's best artists

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72 Draw and paint a sexy cat burglar

Discover how Adam Hughes draws and paints his unique version of Catwoman.

76 Square up to an undead wrestler

Dave Dunstan demonstrates how he uses Photoshop to bring a wrestler to life.

78 The golden rules of comic art

Tommy Lee Edwards shares his tips for visual storytelling using art and page layout.

84 Make the most of photo-collage

Marc Taro Holmes shows you how a photo-collage can be faster than a digital painting.

89 Apply natural media to your art

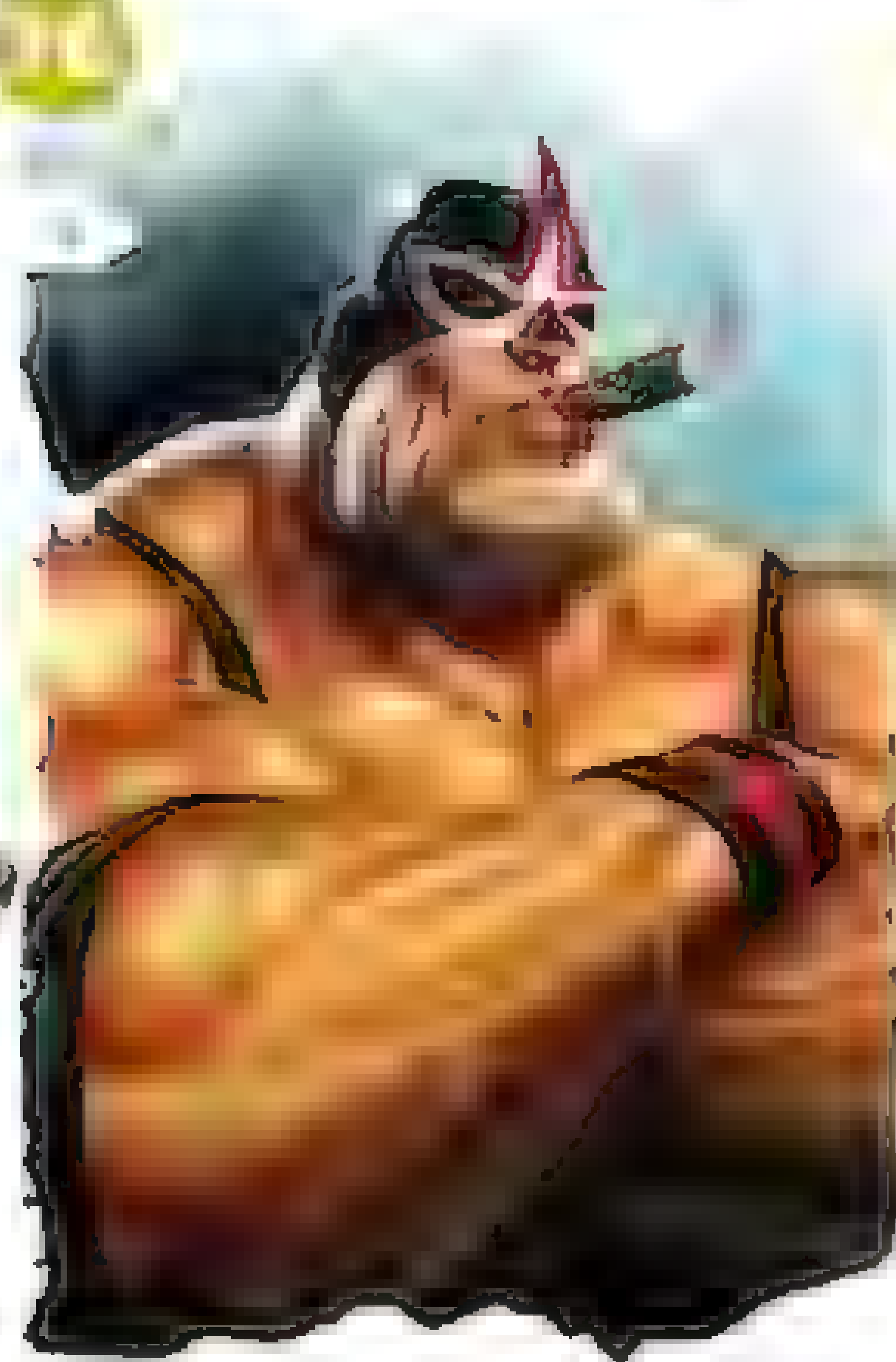
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96 Get more out of Painter's brushes

Jonny Duddle cuts through the complexity of Painter's brushes to demonstrate how to use them effectively.



DRAW AND PAINT A SEXY CAT BURGLAR

Figure 1. *Phragmites australis* (A) and *Spartina patens* (B) in the marsh.

FX



Shortcuts

Repeat

last filter

Ctrl + F (PC)

Cmd + F (Mac)

Use this to repeat the last filter action carried out.



PRO SECRETS

All filters in CMYK

You can use filters in

CMYK mode if you apply

them one channel at a

time! Every individual

channel is just a

greyscale one, combined

with others to make a

colour image. Click a

channel, run your filter,

repeat, and so on.

2 Prepping your scanned art

When you scan a piece of art, it's often in RGB mode. This means it has three channels (red, green and blue) and is 24-bit deep. This means it has a lot of data, which is good, but it's also a lot of data. To make it work better in Photoshop, you need to convert it to CMYK mode. This is because CMYK is the standard for printing. To do this, go to Image > Mode > CMYK. You'll see a warning dialog box. Click 'Convert to CMYK'. This will convert the image to CMYK mode. This is a good idea because it will make the image work better in Photoshop.

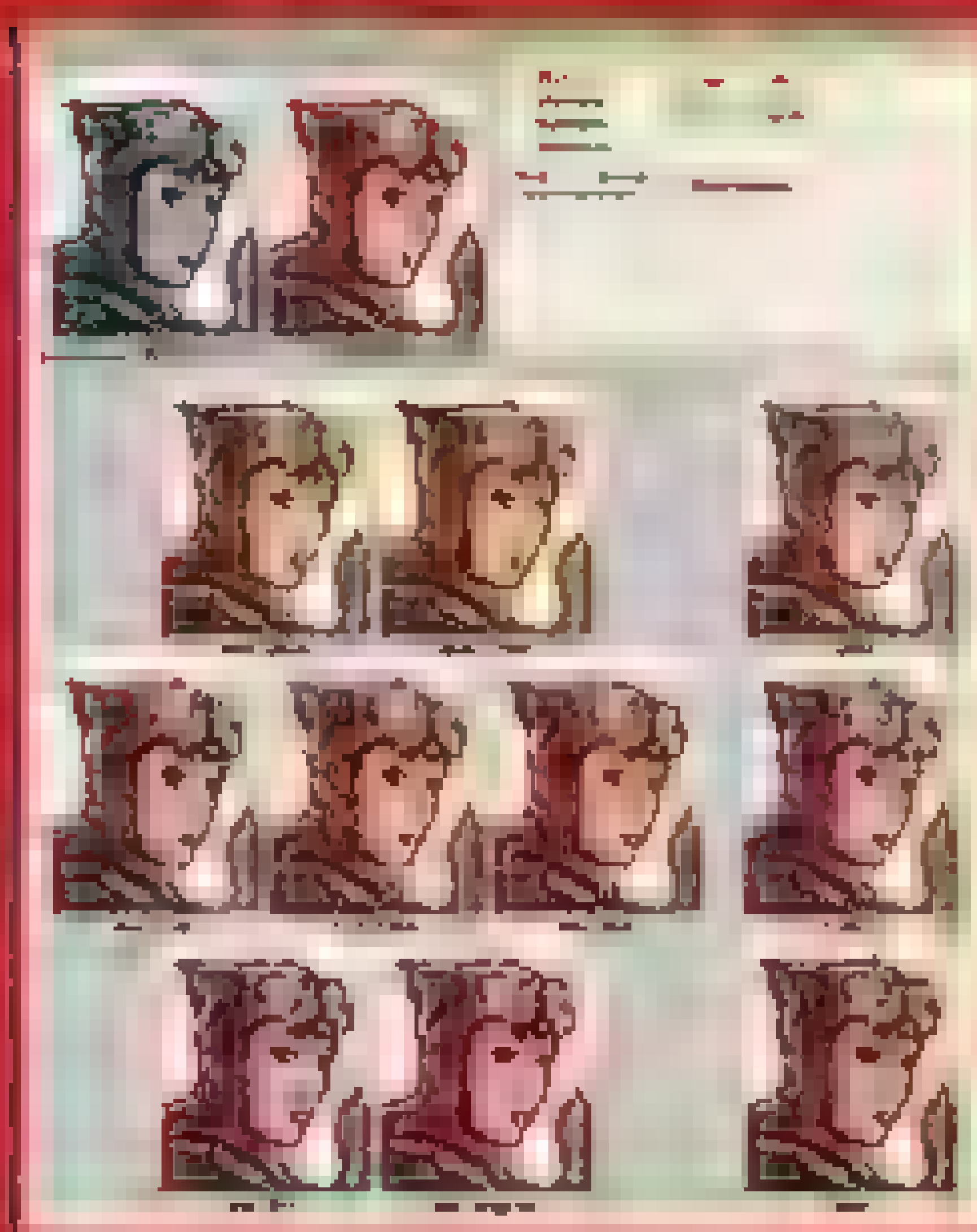


5 Erase to restore

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3 Getting colourful

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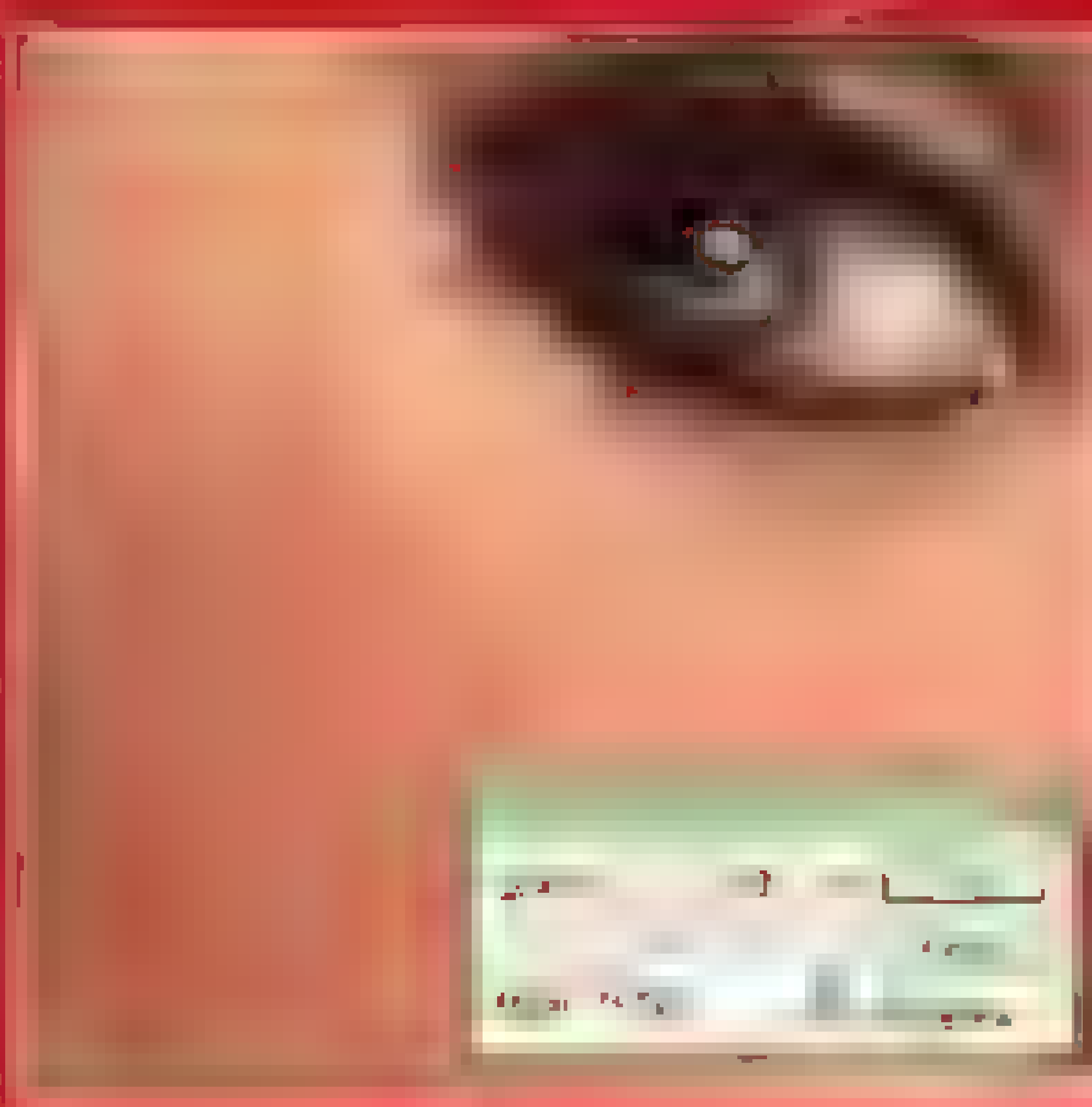
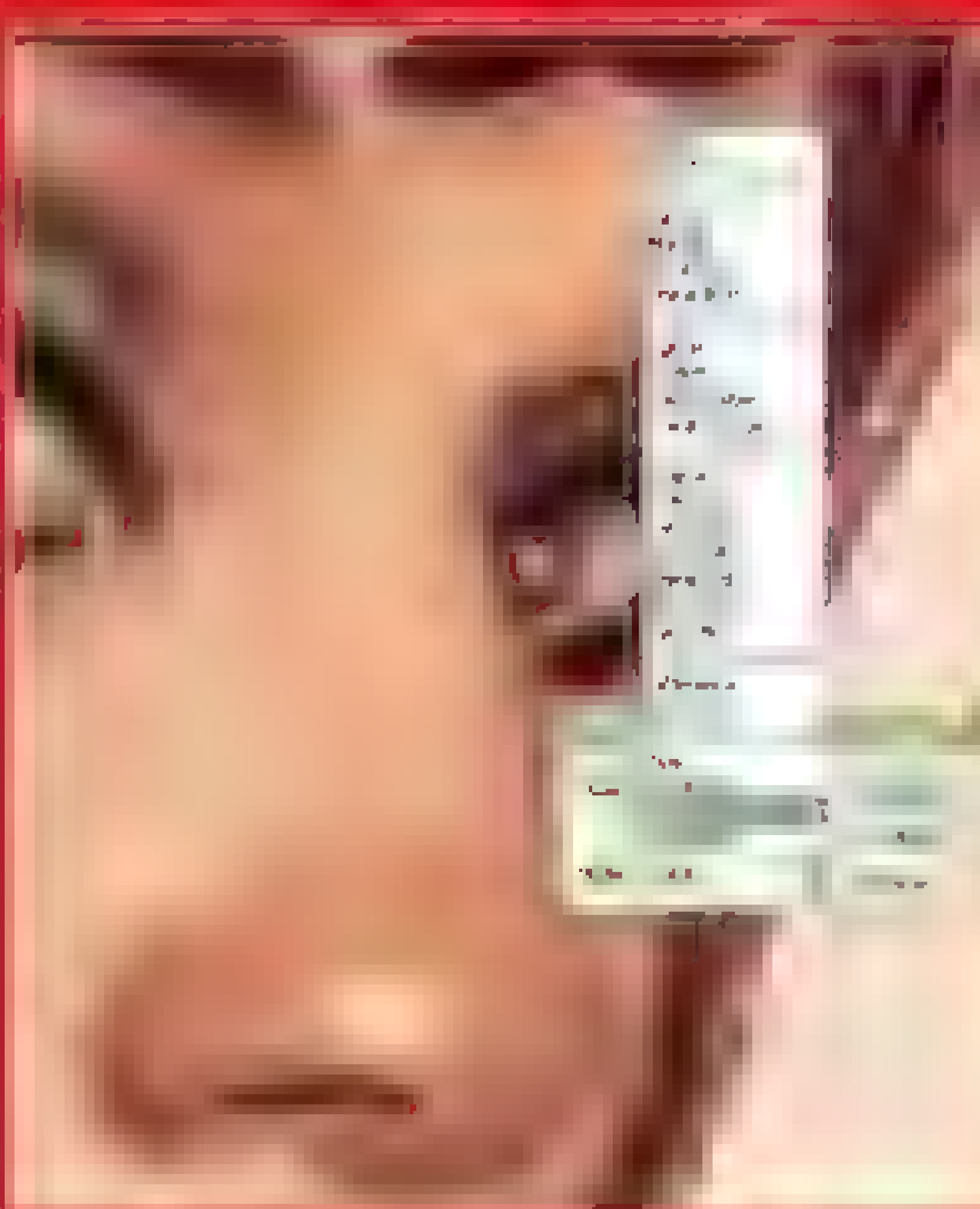


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4 Eliminate unwanted texture

When you have a scanned image, it's often in RGB mode. This means it has three channels (red, green and blue) and is 24-bit deep. This means it has a lot of data, which is good, but it's also a lot of data. To make it work better in Photoshop, you need to convert it to CMYK mode. This is because CMYK is the standard for printing. To do this, go to Image > Mode > CMYK. You'll see a warning dialog box. Click 'Convert to CMYK'. This will convert the image to CMYK mode. This is a good idea because it will make the image work better in Photoshop.



6 Adding colour to the face

When you have a scanned image, it's often in RGB mode. This means it has three channels (red, green and blue) and is 24-bit deep. This means it has a lot of data, which is good, but it's also a lot of data. To make it work better in Photoshop, you need to convert it to CMYK mode. This is because CMYK is the standard for printing. To do this, go to Image > Mode > CMYK. You'll see a warning dialog box. Click 'Convert to CMYK'. This will convert the image to CMYK mode. This is a good idea because it will make the image work better in Photoshop.

7 Make a girl blush

When you have a scanned image, it's often in RGB mode. This means it has three channels (red, green and blue) and is 24-bit deep. This means it has a lot of data, which is good, but it's also a lot of data. To make it work better in Photoshop, you need to convert it to CMYK mode. This is because CMYK is the standard for printing. To do this, go to Image > Mode > CMYK. You'll see a warning dialog box. Click 'Convert to CMYK'. This will convert the image to CMYK mode. This is a good idea because it will make the image work better in Photoshop.

Photoshop SQUARE UP TO AN UNDEAD WRESTLER

Dave Dunstan reveals the Photoshop techniques behind his Mexican grappler-cum-guardian angel, who's back from the dead and wants a rematch

PROFILE

Dave Dunstan
COUNTRY: Australia



Dave, aka Loopydave, started off as a graphic designer

before switching to the wacky world of drawing crazy stuff for money. loopydave.deviantart.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Dave Dunstan folder in Workshops.

ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES:
CLOUD BRUSH 1

I experimented with this for the background.

CLOUD BRUSH 2

I used this to add texture to his chin. They're both courtesy of Dan LUVIS. danluis.deviantart.com

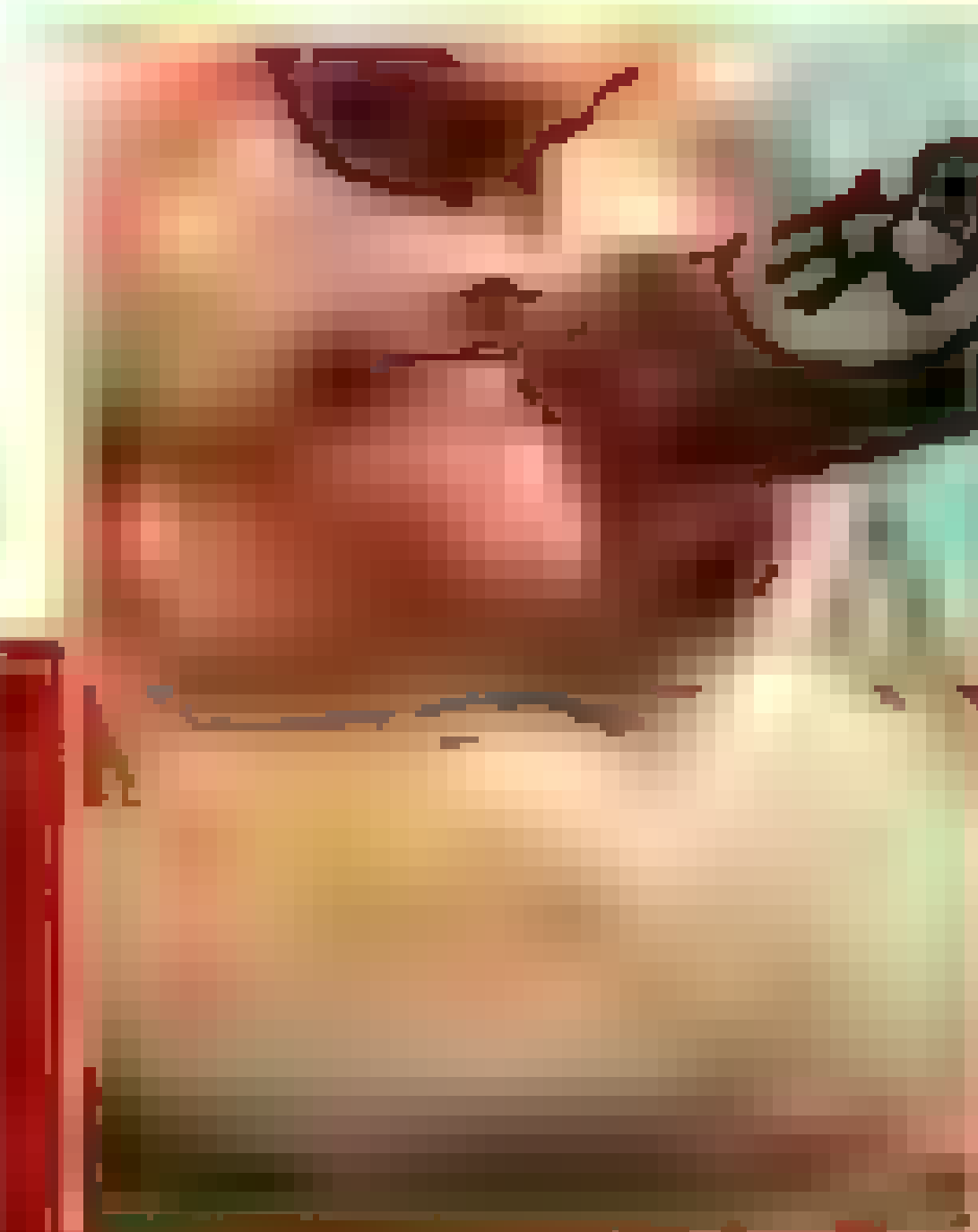
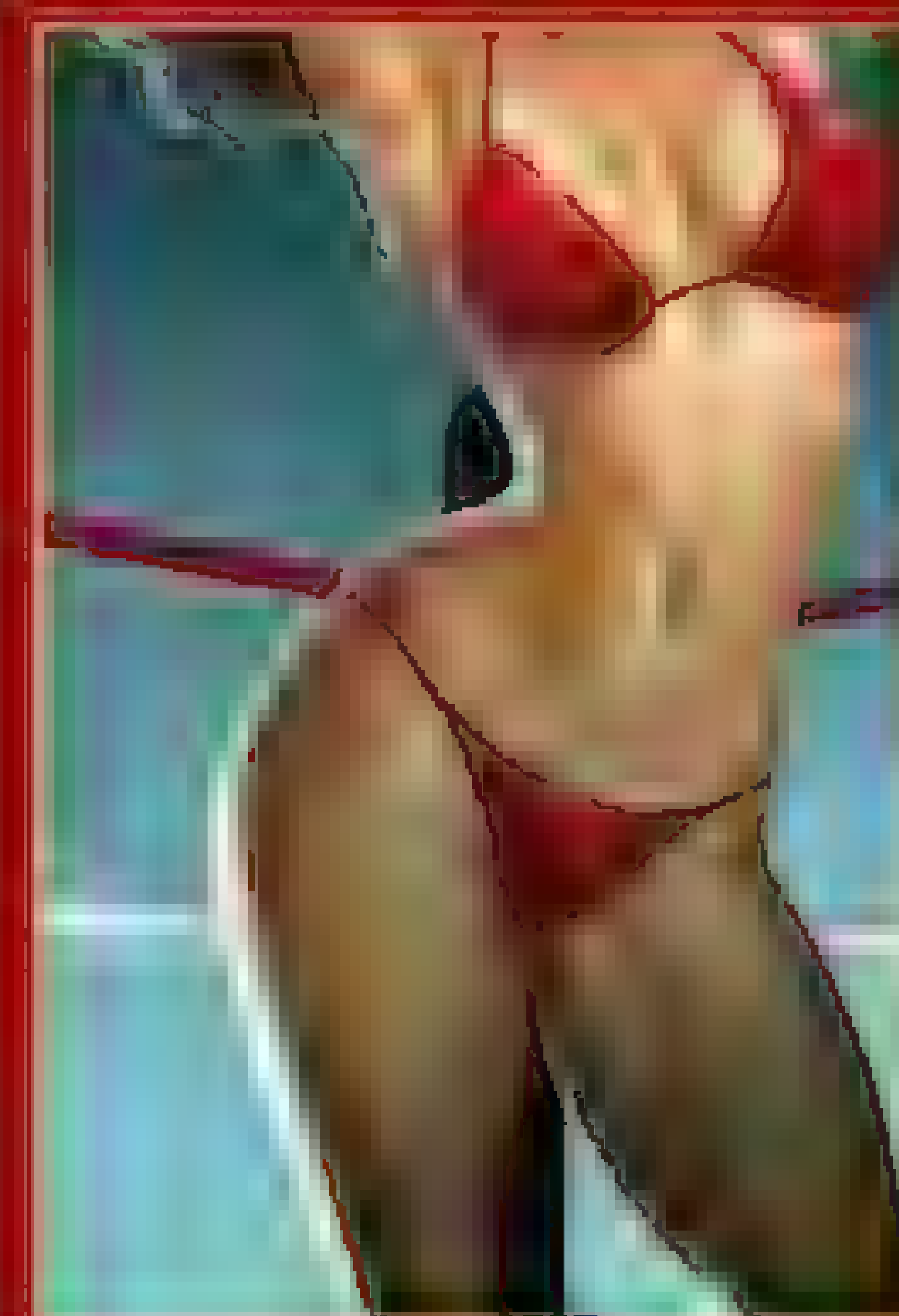
When the talented artist Dave Wilkins asked me to do a pin-up piece for his upcoming hardback book of El Zombo Fantasma, I jumped at the chance. I know Dave a little through deviantART and although I wasn't familiar with the character at the time, I did some research... and what's not to love about a sleazy, undead, monster-fighting Mexican wrestler who gets a gig as a guardian angel? The brief was pretty simple: "Anything you want to do, as long as it has a signature Loopydave hottie in there somewhere". If only all clients were that easy to please!

I immediately thought of making an old-style Lucha Libre poster, with crazy bright colours, grainy print and semi hand-written, slightly scratched lettering. But after a couple of thumbnails that were looking too busy and messy, I pared it back to the basic elements needed to give the piece just enough information about the character – which included the obligatory Loopydave woman, of course. I kept a little of my original concept in the text, but when I found that I didn't have a font with the right feel, I drew the words 'El Zombo' in Illustrator.

It may sound obvious, but it's always important to make sure you have the size and format right before you start even your rough thumbnails. The fact that this particular illustration is – unusually – for an almost square format book means the layout will be different than if it was for a more standard page ratio.

Warm and cool

Colours are one way to make various parts of a picture stand out. Here I use the old 'warm colours to bring things forward, cooler to send them back' approach. I keep areas of the saturated warm tones on El Zombo, but add more of the distant cooler tones to the base colour of the Ring Woman (as well as a lesser saturation), which will help him to dominate the foreground and her to recede more.



Select a brush

I mostly just stick to two brushes when working and have them set to a mid- to low-level Opacity. I use the standard Photoshop soft brush for soft gradients and areas, and the standard hard edge brush for contrasting areas and harder lines.





Light sources

It's important to work out the direction of your light sources before you paint, so you can calculate shadows and highlights. I do that either by marking it on my sketch or keeping track of it in my head. I'm using a basic two-light set-up to illuminate our spandex friend, and to get the maximum effect out of the rim light I place it in pretty much the opposite direction to the main light. That way, the rim light hits the shadow or darker areas, producing greater contrast.

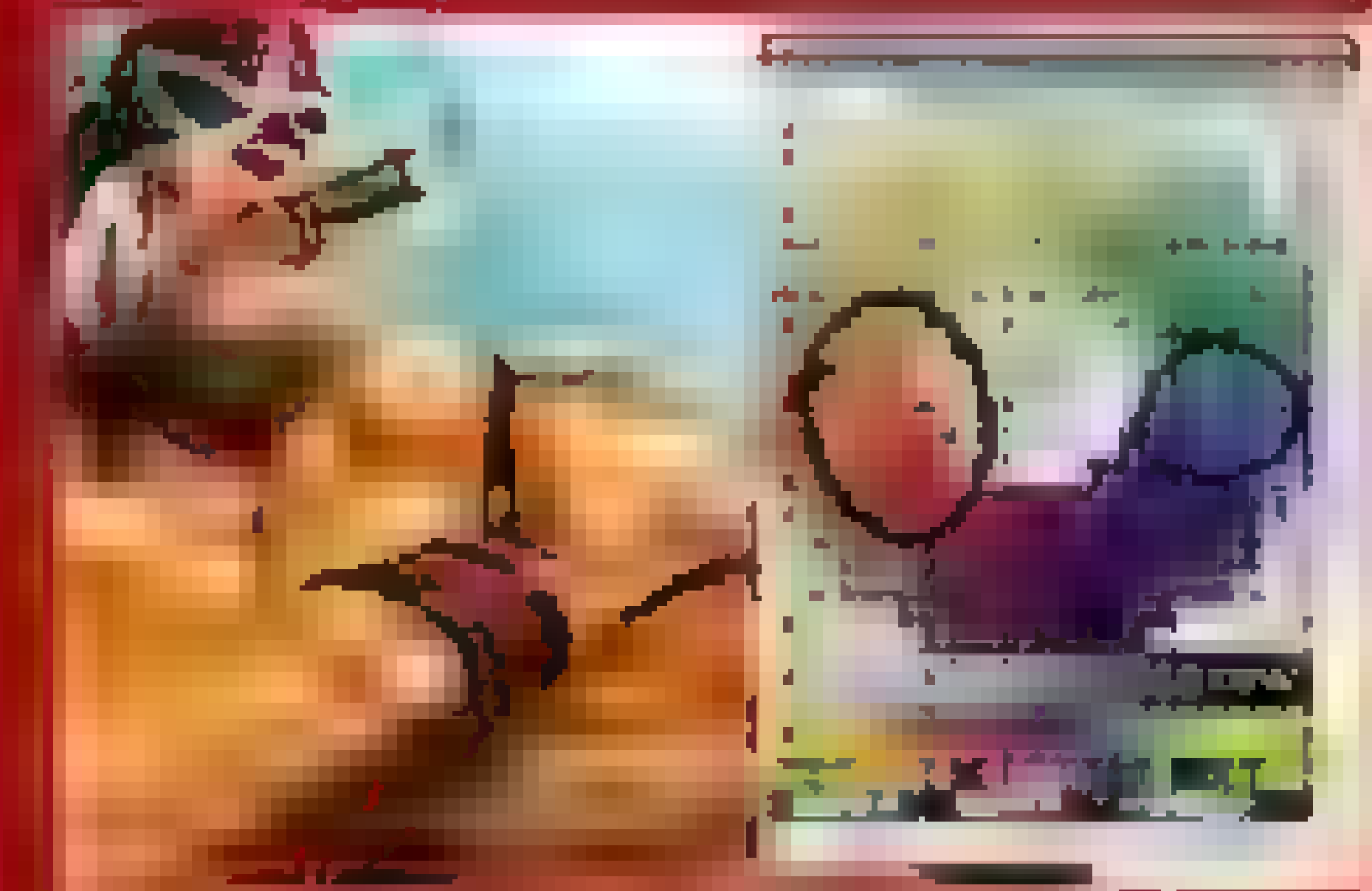
How I create...

EL ZOMBO



Getting my ideas down on paper

I start with a quick sketch – a visual thought process. As I keep paring this piece back, I eventually get down to El Zombo and the Ring Woman. I draw them up in a tighter version to scan into Photoshop and paint. As I've grown more confident, the sketches have become looser, but I still include the basic details and lighting direction.



Selecting the colour range

I block in my colours before I paint and usually restrict the palette – it's easier to manage and often more effective. Colour selection was easy here: I already had his costume to start with and I'd researched some old Lucha Libre photos with amazing rich orange skin tones. The background came from playing around with the opposite side of the colour wheel for extra punch.



Adding authentic levels of detail

Getting lost in the details is a real pleasure, although sometimes to the detriment of the finished piece. I find that certain little extras, such as clothing and shoes, really help to sell the believability of a piece. Garments are made up of different elements and if you pay attention to where each joint and add a seam or some stitches, it adds a sense of authenticity, even on something as toony as this.

THE GOLDEN RULES OF COMIC ART

Tommy Lee Edwards walks us through his methods for creating top-notch visual storytelling, panel by panel

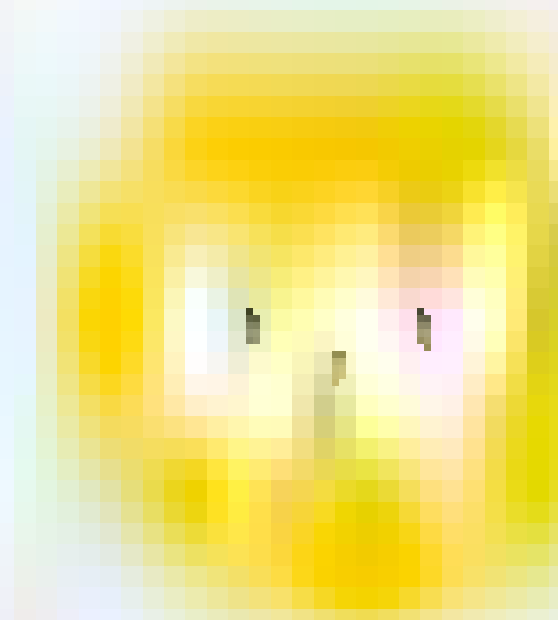
PROFILE

Tommy Lee Edwards
COUNTRY: US



In his nearly 20 years of experience TLE has illustrated

comics like *The Question* and *Marvel 1985*, designed games like *Command & Conquer*, painted countless *Star Wars* books and created concept art for films such as *Harry Potter*.
www.tommyleeedwards.com



Whether within a single key-frame concept for a film, a double-page magazine spread or the sequence of panels and pages of a comic book, an illustrator has the power to ruin or greatly enhance the story being told. Working in

these mediums, I typically take on the roles of designer, actor, director, lighting tech, costume designer, researcher and many others. The ability to draw pretty pictures won't be enough on its own. Creating comic books can be the toughest, yet most rewarding form of

visual storytelling. Starting with just the script and an empty slate of endless possibilities, I'll walk you through my method for creating stories that will stretch your creative muscles and give the audience a reading experience that's both engaging and clear to follow

1. HOW I START A COMIC

Most examples here in this workshop will centre on my Image Comics series *TURF*. Jonathan Ross and I created the story and characters and we go back and forth with loads of ideas. When Jonathan gets me his final script, I'm pretty well aware of what I'm in for, but I want to be sure I do the script justice, so I read it and let it unfold naturally. I try not to think of the fact that I'll have to translate it into images. I just enjoy it. Later, I read it again for inspiration, letting the images play out in my mind and I start to make choices and see layout ideas. I'm beginning to think about the characters, the locations, the lighting, the costumes and the camera set-ups. Often I'll get ideas and doodle them down on the page so as not to forget them later. By the time I actually start tackling the finished artwork in a comic book, I've typically read the script four times and have worked out a general direction



CASTING YOUR CHARACTERS

Keeping your characters diverse and consistent will greatly enhance the storytelling. It helps to sketch them out first, thinking beyond merely the costume. I imagine a character's personality and background. It helps me to base recurring character designs on people I know or actors. It helps to keep each figure distinctive, and so benefits the reader, too.

3

Beyond visiting the actual locations where a story might take place, I research the subject online and at the library. Period photos and films all help me to find a direction for the illustrations. Finding a story's direction goes beyond how I draw the characters and locations, and includes my colour choices, lighting, composition and page design.

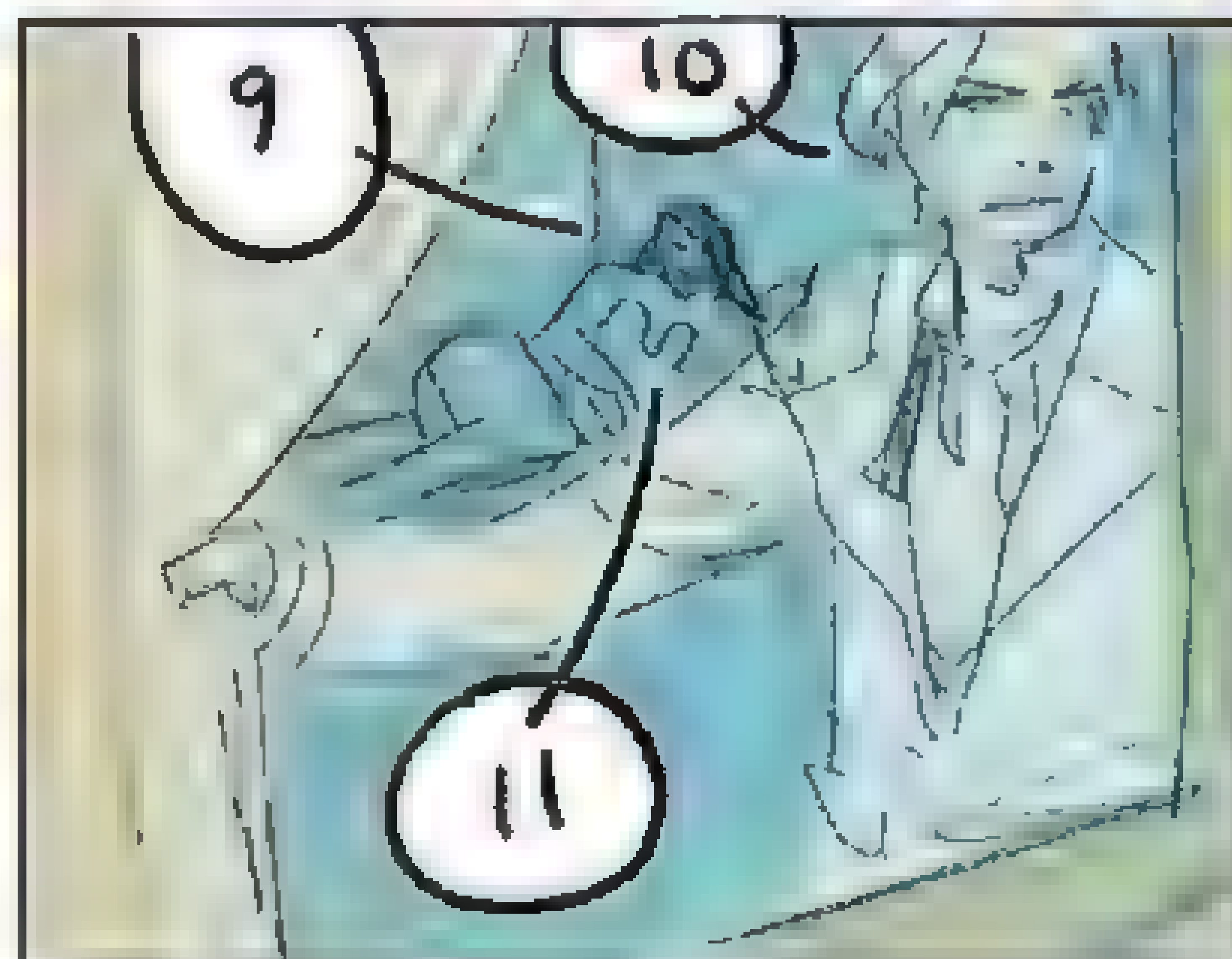
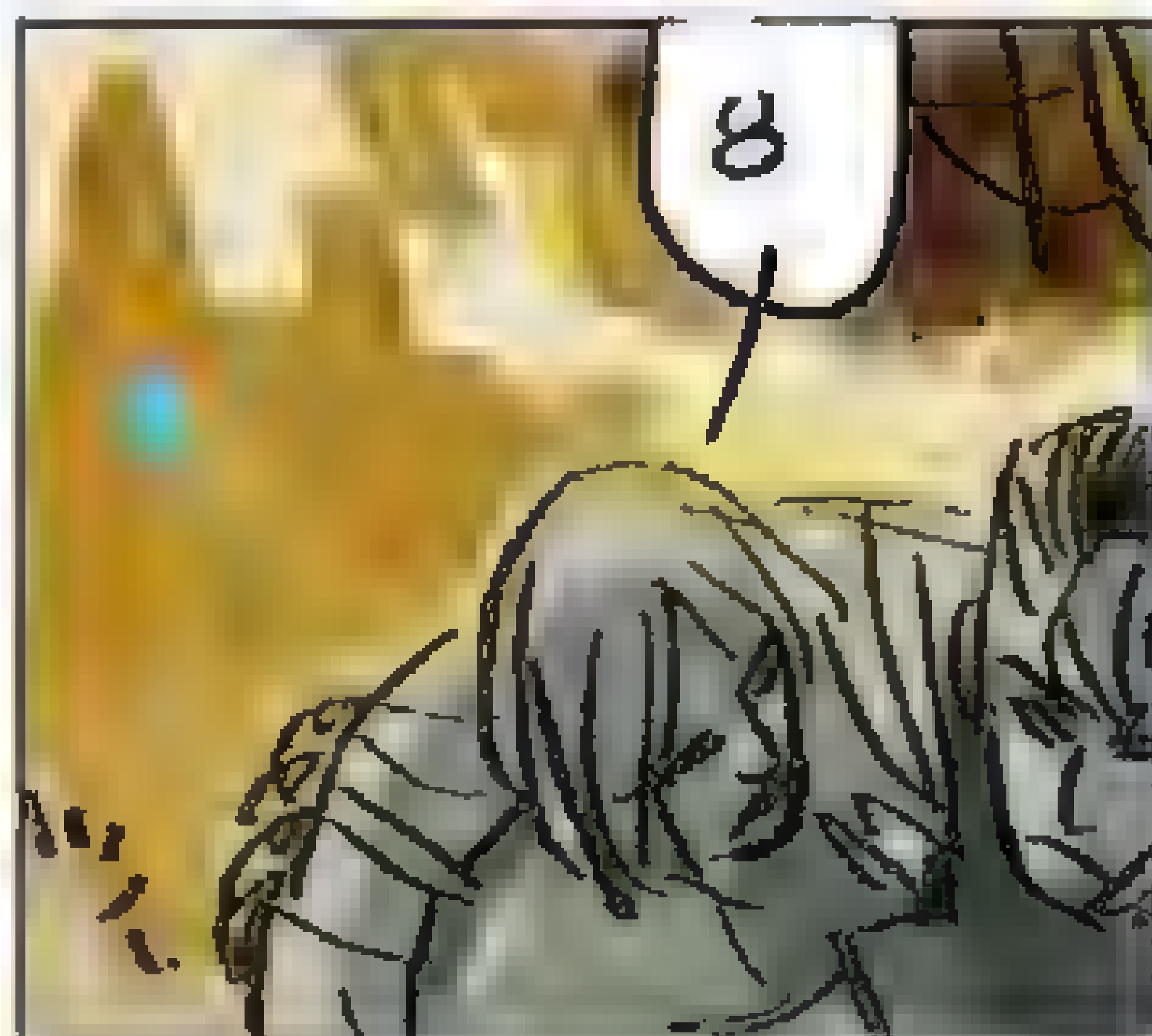
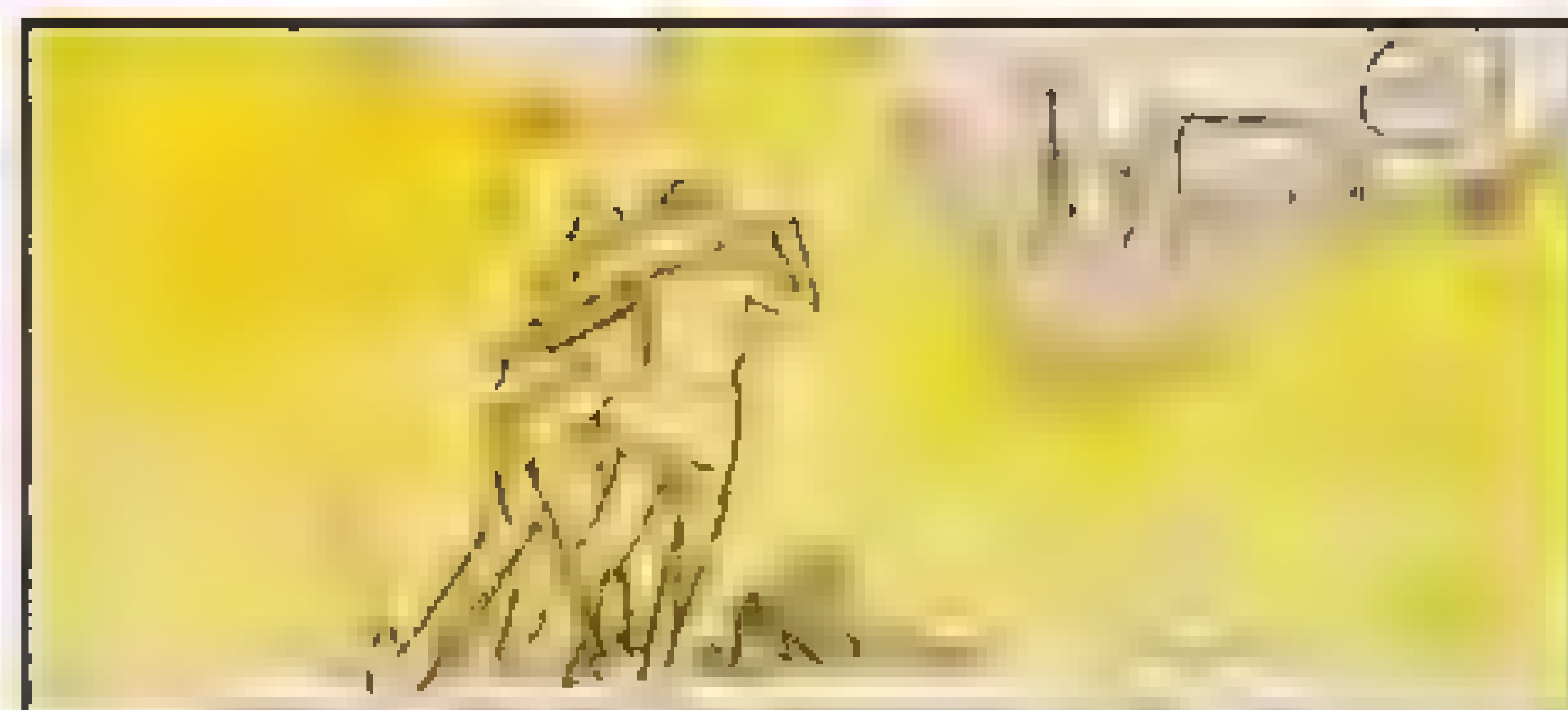
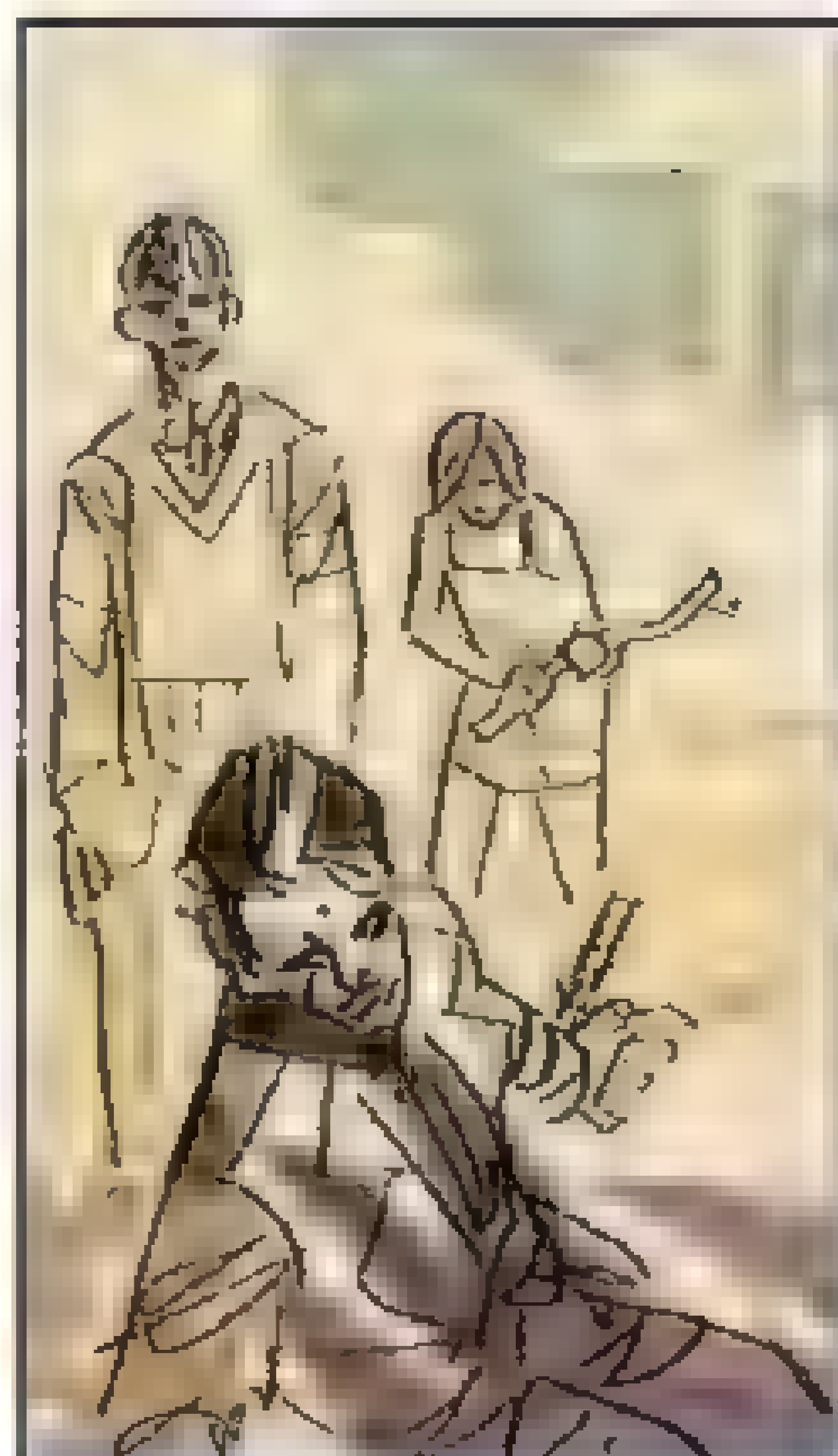


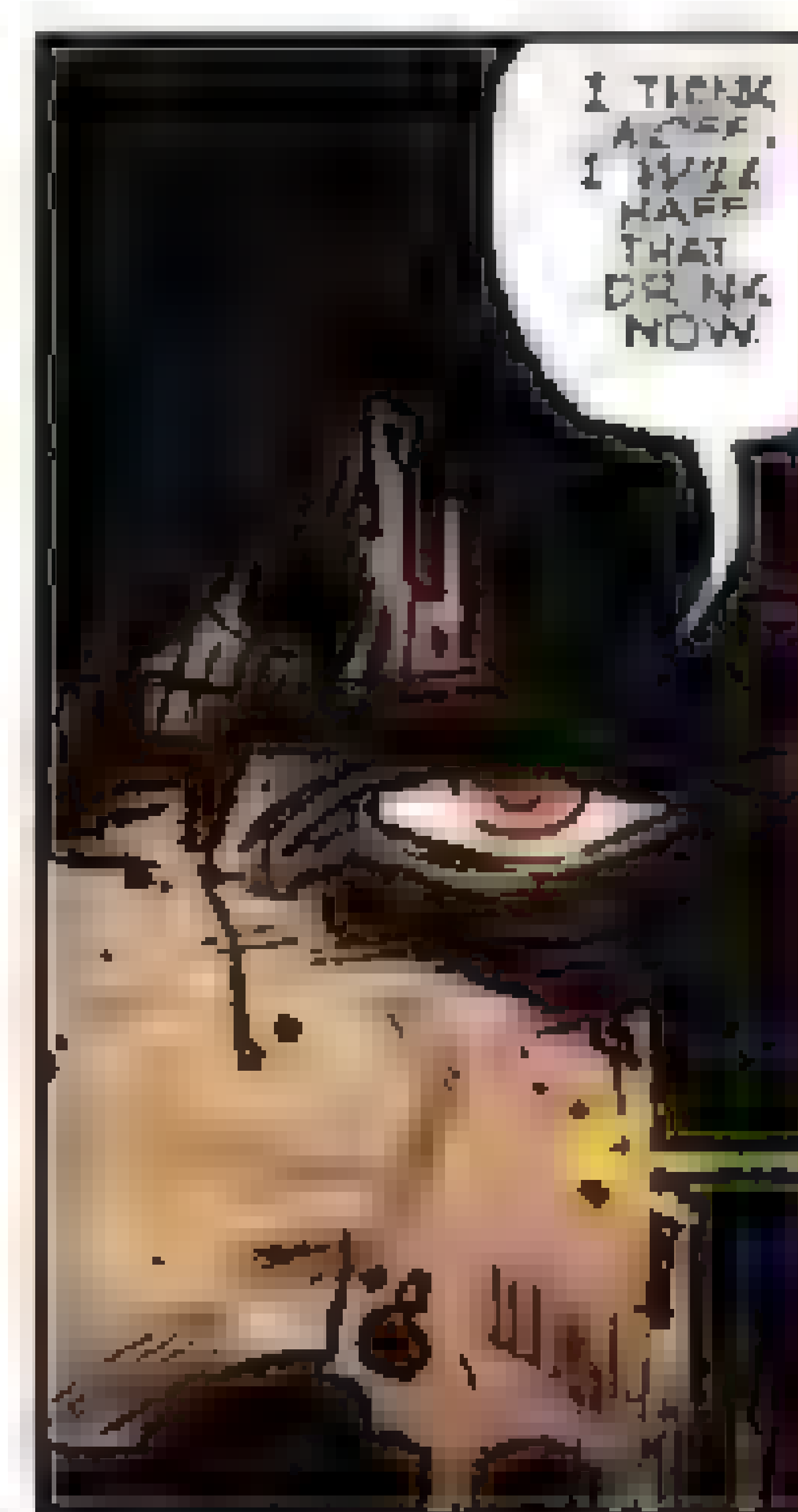
4

Whether your story takes place in feudal Japan or outer space, you should avoid fakery at all cost. Making your environments all the more believable will help make a story more plausible, and therefore more effective. Before starting the first issue of TJRF, I took a research trip to New York. We knew that many scenes would take place at the police's 1920s headquarters, so I found it and photographed the hell out of it.

5

This is by far the most important stage. This is the part that separates the pros and the wannabes. Laying out a story is my favourite part and also the toughest, because it's unique to comics. You need to put the storytelling first. Try not to concentrate too much on the actual drawing at this stage. You should be able to throw out any drawing at any time to make room for better ideas as you work out the sequence and composition. I draw my layouts on my Wacom Cintiq tablet in Photoshop. This way, I can quickly revise or move elements and indicate lighting or colour ideas.



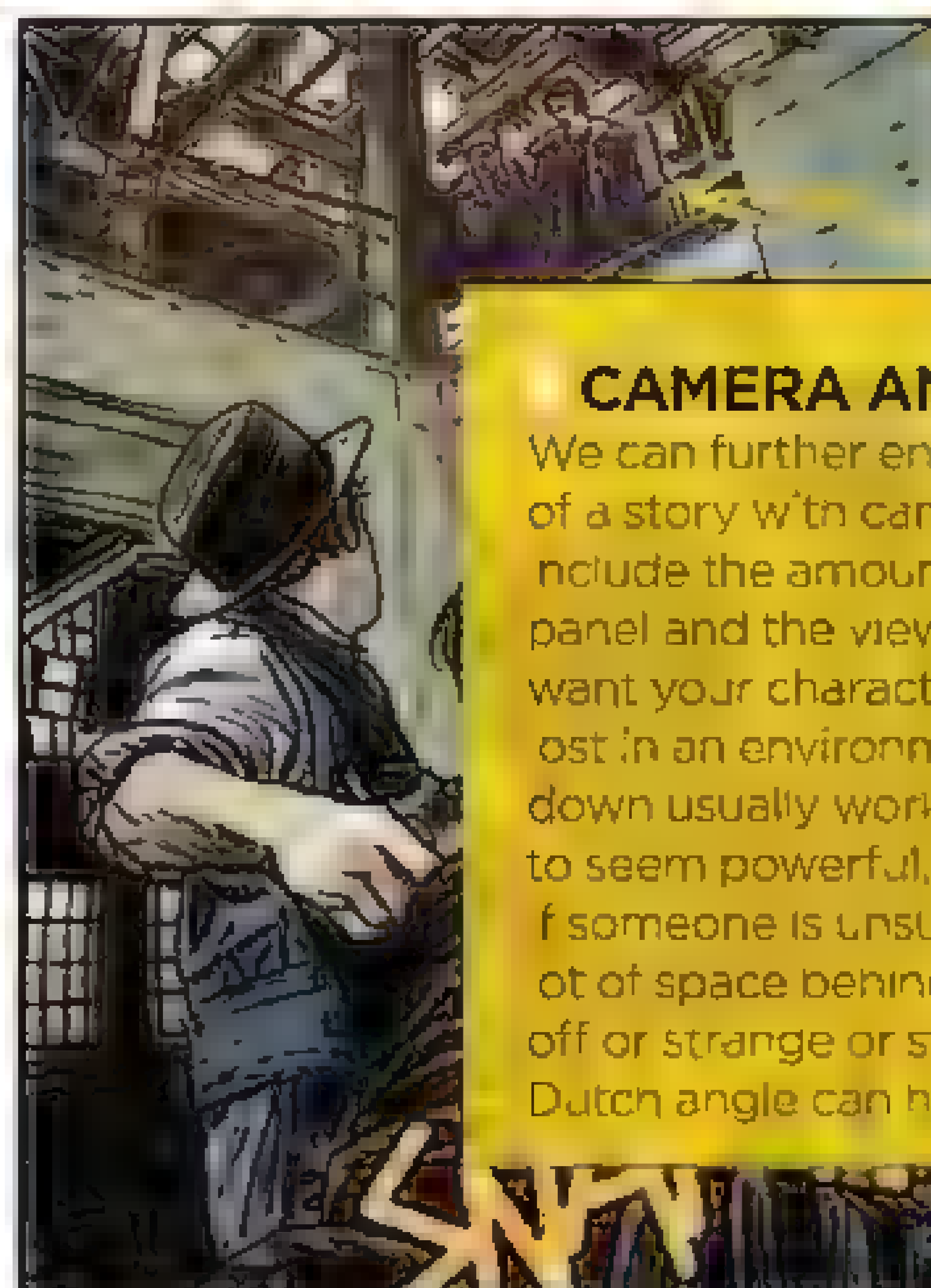
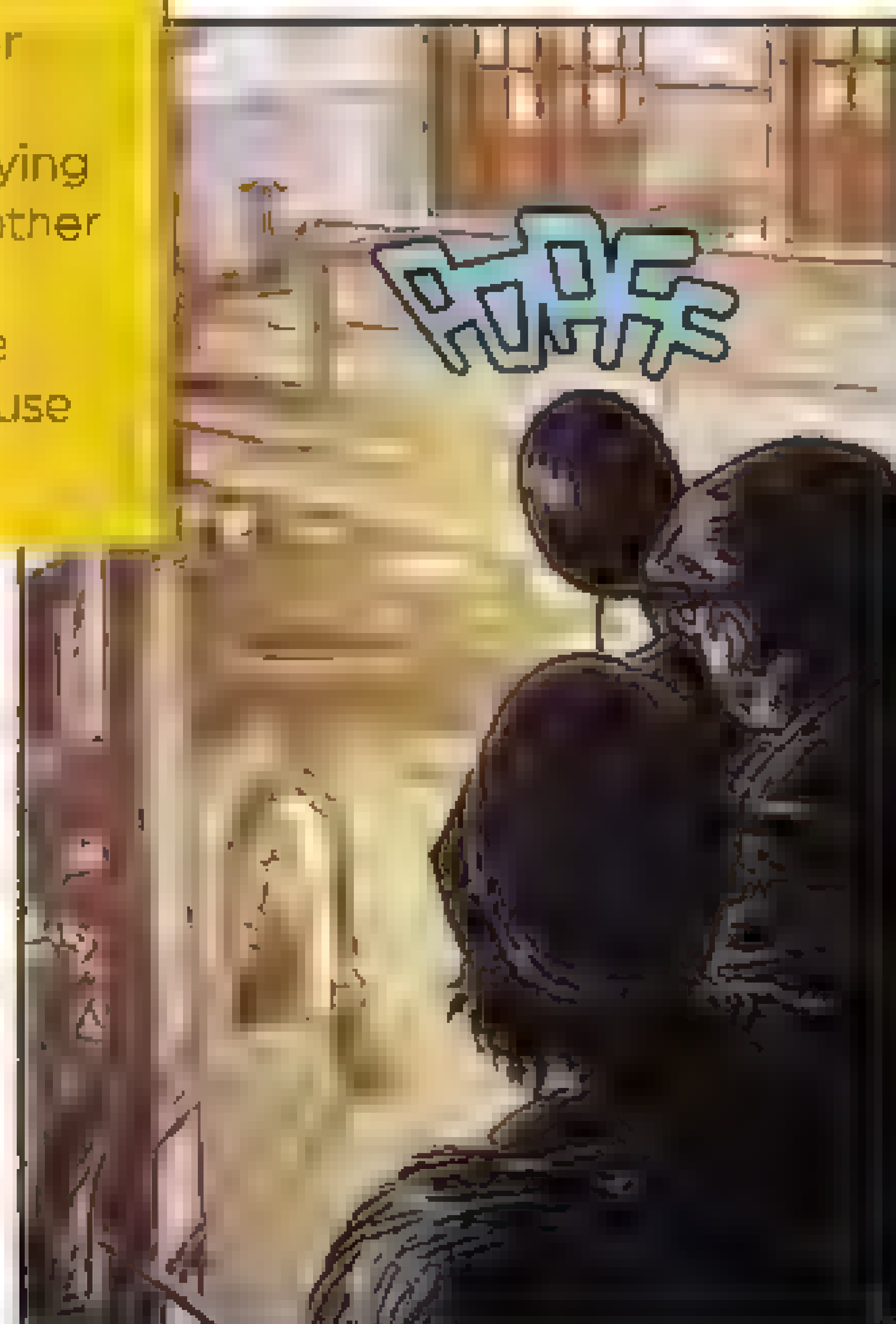
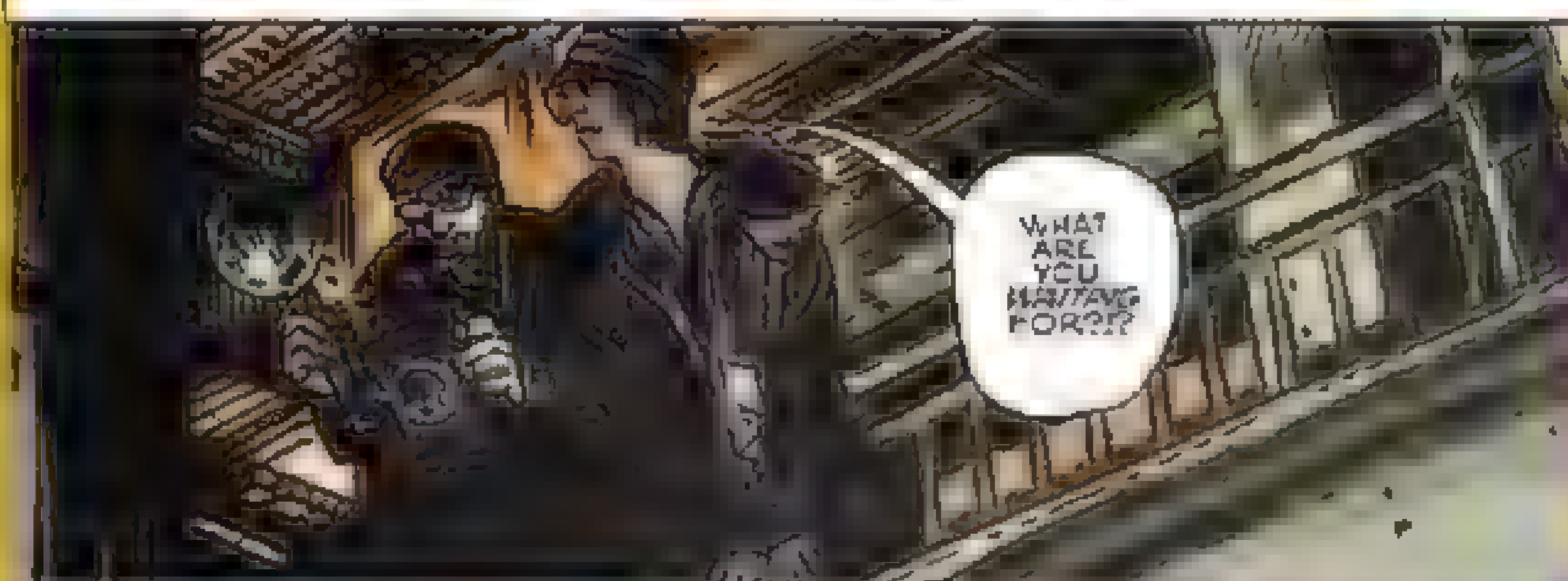


SHOOTING FOR CLARITY

You need to think about using the establishing shot as an anchor for the page. Where have you set up the camera in this shot? Now work around it. Sometimes I make a floor map of a location, and decide who is where, and when I will feature them. This helps me to follow the 180 degree line rule. When a character's eyes look a certain way, it creates an invisible straight line. Keeping the viewer on the correct side of that line is key to flowing continuity.

THE PAGE'S ESTABLISHING SHOT

Every page of a comic book should be able to stand alone and make sense to the reader. Looking at any page in the story, I should always know where and when things are taking place. In at least one panel of every page you need to firmly establish where each character is in relation to the other(s). This frees other panels to cut to two-shots or close-ups or anything else. Illustrators excuse themselves by saying "Oh, we see that on the other page, you'll understand when you read the whole sequence". That's no excuse that's laziness.



CAMERA ANGLES

We can further enhance emotional aspects of a story with camera angles. This could include the amount of information in a panel and the viewing height or tilt. If you want your characters to feel insignificant or lost in an environment, a high angle looking down usually works. If you want a subject to seem powerful, try shooting from below. If someone is unsure of themselves, put a lot of space behind them. If something is off or strange or suspenseful, a tilted or Dutch angle can help.

You should be able to throw out any drawing at any time to make room for better ideas as you work out the sequence

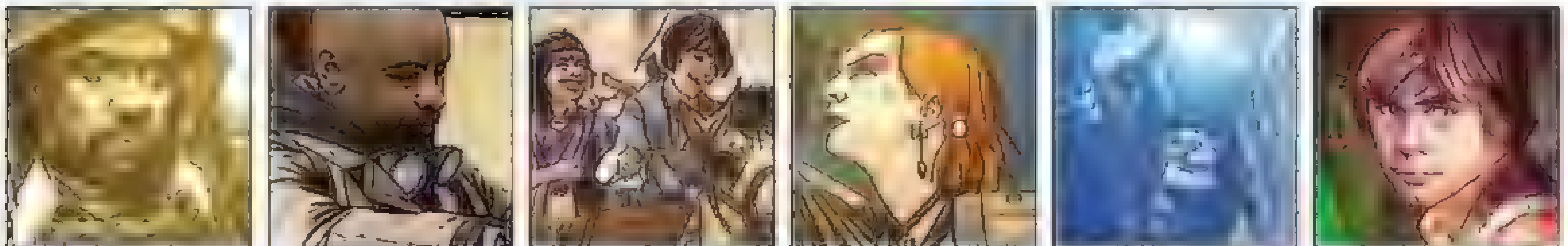


9

Panels two, four and six are my establishing shots. I wanted the car to look like it was moving fast; low angles work best for this. The car's direction from left to right feels faster to the reader than right to left. It also creates a straight line that dictates my camera placements. What happens if my camera jumped that line and our view shifted to make the car travel right to left? It would become confusing and stop the movement, or even suggest that it was a different car.

10

Generally in a western culture we read left to right, top to bottom. Sometimes you can force a reader's eye to go against that rule. Above is a typical page where the second panel serves as our establishing shot. I've put clarity first followed by camera angle choices. As another aspect that's unique to comics I'll start to think now about the flow and composition of the page as a whole piece of art. Values (lights and darks) guide our eye through a composition. I typically try squinting at a painting or successful movie still or photograph to study the composition. Using these values is another great way to create shapes and angles that guide the reader from panel to panel.



STYLE AND MEDIUM

Sometimes different projects can call for a different approach. Some of these choices are practical, and deal with budget or time or the fact that I need to move and change things later. But I also let a project's story influence my choice of medium. Prince of

Persia is a historical adventure video game. It was also a slick big-budget movie. It felt right to tackle the graphic novel digitally on my Cintiq. I used blur effects and imported textures that they might not fit as well with another book. Unlike TURF, I chose to have the Prince of Persia artwork bleed off the page and have panels inset on top of others.

INK VS DIGITAL

I wanted TURF to have a timeless feel to it and to look a bit like an older kind of comic. Therefore, the series generally has traditional layouts with standard gutters separating the panels. There are no insets and no full bleeds. Working traditionally in ink with a brush was an easy decision here. It works well for depicting a historical setting while delivering an underlying scary vibe all around.



13

Sticking with our carry theme, it's important to keep things simple. Simplifying forms and choosing how much detail to include will help avoid a completely muddled



mess of a picture. On content-heavy pages, can you imagine if we saw every shoelace window, tooth and eyeball? We'd lose the composition – and the story.

14

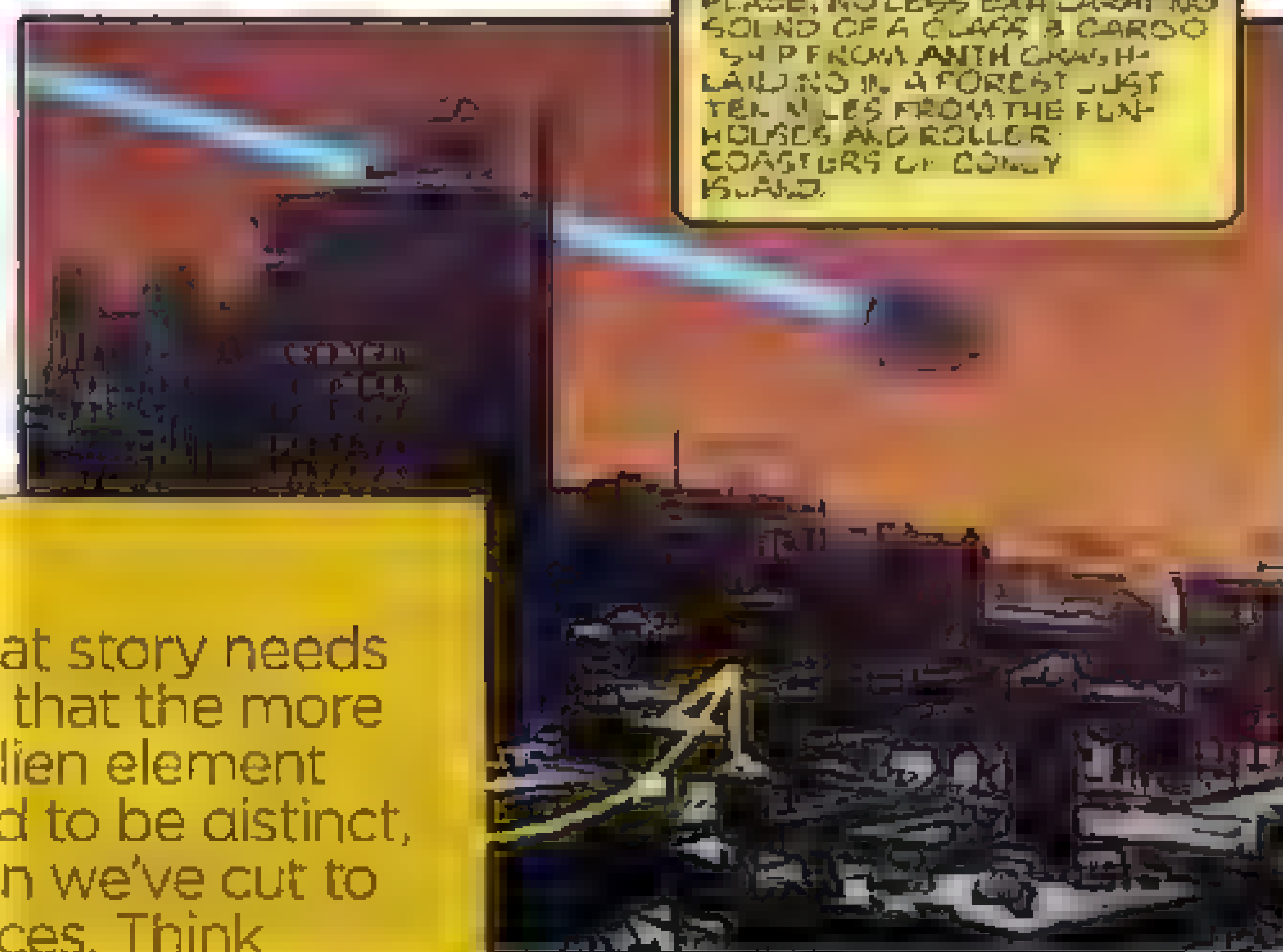
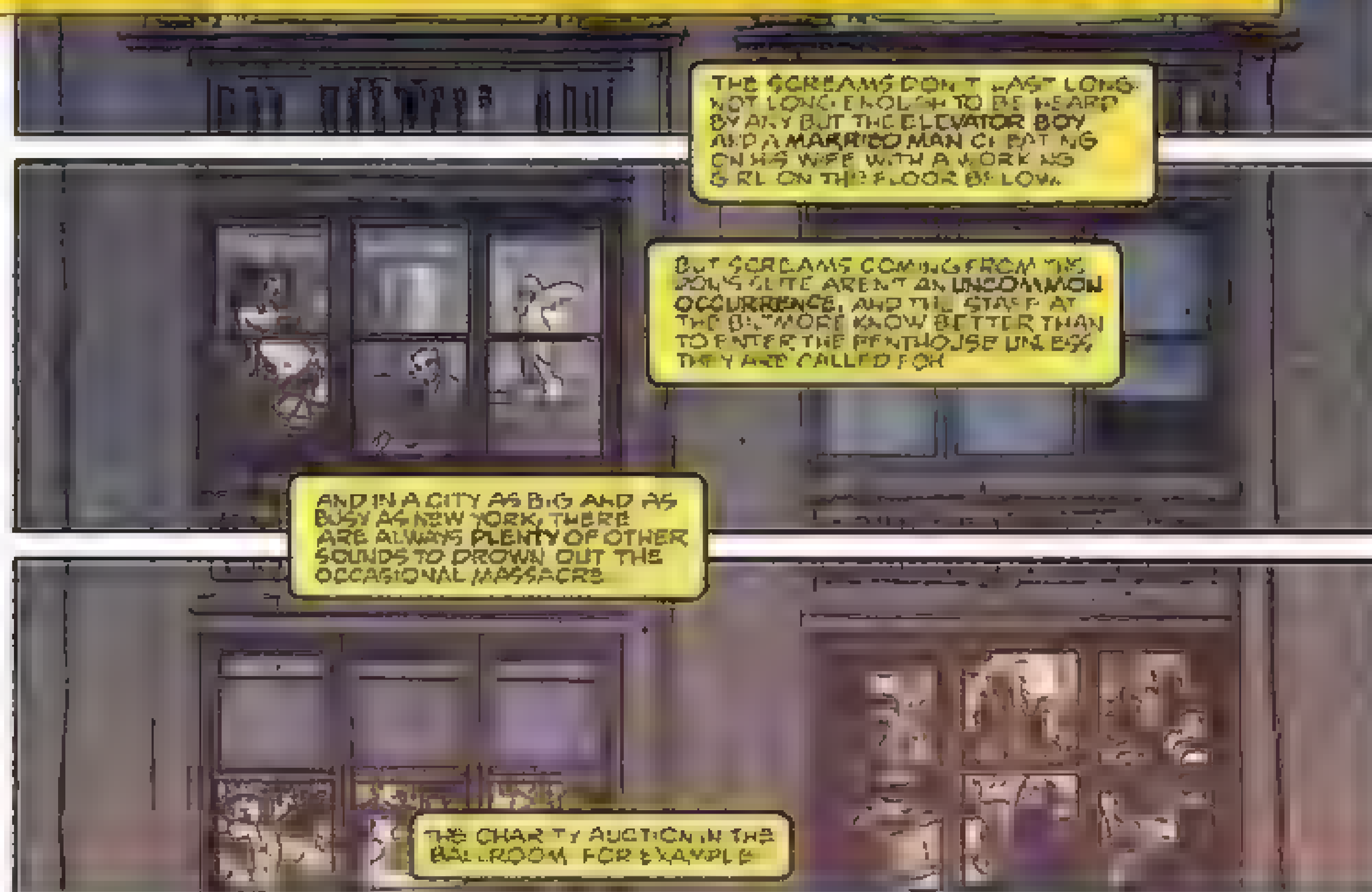
This is another reason why it's best to work from a full script rather than a plot. The text helps dictate

my page layout and guides me on bringing the characters to life.

The way you've cast the characters can get you half-way there.

Facial expressions and body language are imperative. Your

characters should interact with each other and the environment.



SENSE OF PLACE

Speaking of environment, a great story needs great locations. On TURF, I find that the more authentic it is, the stranger an alien element can feel. The locations also need to be distinct, so the reader understands when we've cut to different scenes at different places. Think about how you can use colour to enhance this aspect, along with lighting and texture.



SHARE WITH OTHERS

A group of friends and I started a virtual studio called the BLVD. We appear at conventions and work on various projects together, as well as critiquing each other's work in an effort to be the best storytellers possible. You should always show what you're working on to colleagues you respect, and be able to take helpful criticism. Sometimes it's hard to look objectively at your own work, so make sure friends or family look at your comic's page and can describe the story to you. Can they tell the where, why, how and when of it?

17

John Workman has lettered most of my comics for the past 15 years or so. It's nearly impossible to separate his beautiful hand-drawn letters from the artwork. They depend upon one another to tell a story in comic book form. Some people prefer not to read comics and get frustrated when balloons cover the artwork; they'd rather just look at it. The lettering *is* the artwork. It's a comic book. You read it. However, it's true that sometimes the lettering can feel intrusive if the illustrator has failed to think about it and has placed it in as an afterthought. As you can tell from my rough layouts, the lettering is an integral part of the layout and composition of each panel and page. It's a fantastic tool that can enhance your story with placement or use of styles and sound effects.



The lettering is an integral part of the layout and composition of each panel and page

18

The days of trying to beat a FedEx shipping time have almost vanished for me now. I can just upload my work to a client over FTP or email. The art never has to leave the studio thanks to my scanner. Computers can have a huge impact on production aspects and also on your storytelling, by giving you more control. In a way, you're closer to the reader and should feel even more responsibility in delivering your best work.

19

Lucky I get to pencil, ink and colour my comics. Beyond the collaboration with a writer and letterer, I get to have almost total control right up until the end. But even if you don't and are having other artists ink or colour your work, you need to work together to enhance the story. Sometimes no matter how well I draw a comic, the colour can make or break the storytelling. I've had jobs completely ruined by colour that was over-rendered or lacked a sense of place and atmosphere. So from the beginning stages of translating a script into images to the final stage of colour to print, you should always let the story act as an anchor.



Photoshop

MAKE THE MOST OF PHOTO-COLLAGES



Artist PROFILE



Marc Taro Holmes Wonders if the powerful features of today's creative software means the end of digital painting...

Okay, so it's a bit dramatic saying 'the end of digital painting' but over 15 years I've frequently had to upgrade my methods to meet expectations and I've seen good artists become obsolete. I feel that traditional digital painting has peaked, and I'm thinking what to do about that.

Everyone understands how painting replaced drawing. Years ago it was common to see fine drawings used in production, especially for tasks such as costume or character design. But

gradually, painting took over. If it's just as fast, why wouldn't we want to work in colour? Why not convey texture and lighting as well as design? Less isn't really more. More is actually more.

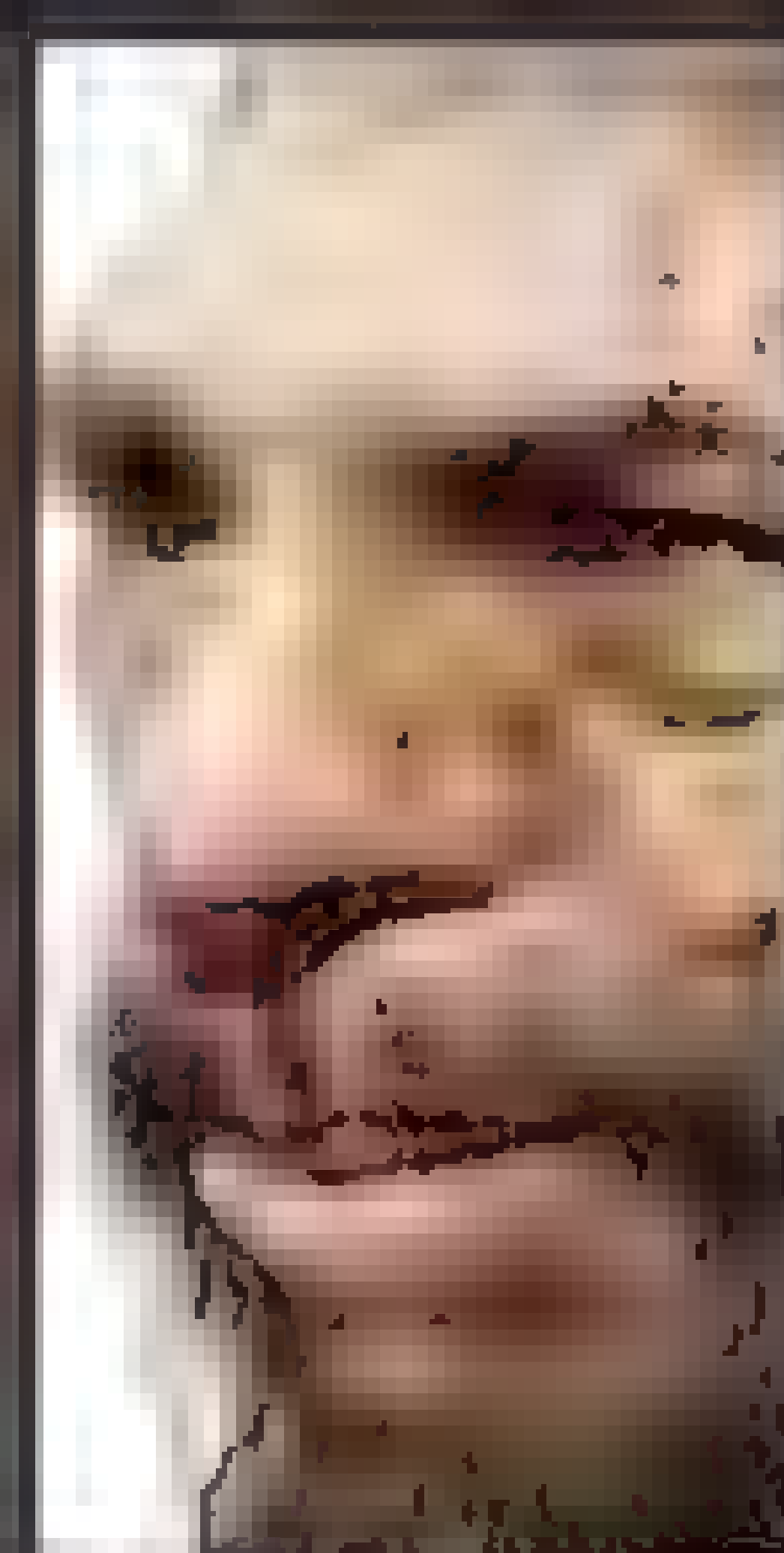
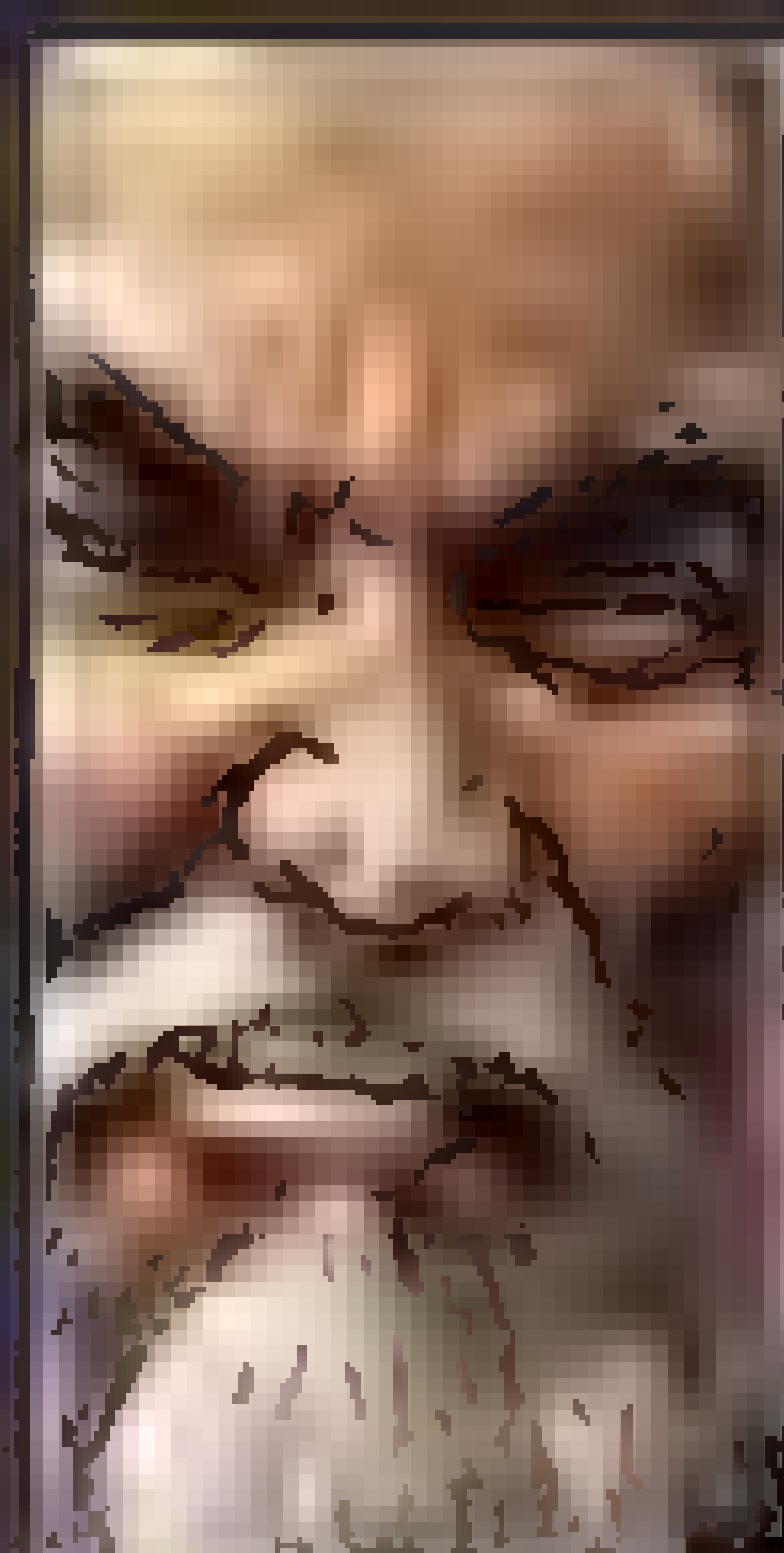
Now that we can quickly render a scene to achieve perfect perspective and lighting, or ZBrush a creature and have unlimited warts and wrinkles, we've developed higher expectations for detail and realism in conceptual work.

When faced with a design task we need to fully answer the question: "This thing that I'm inventing – what exactly does it

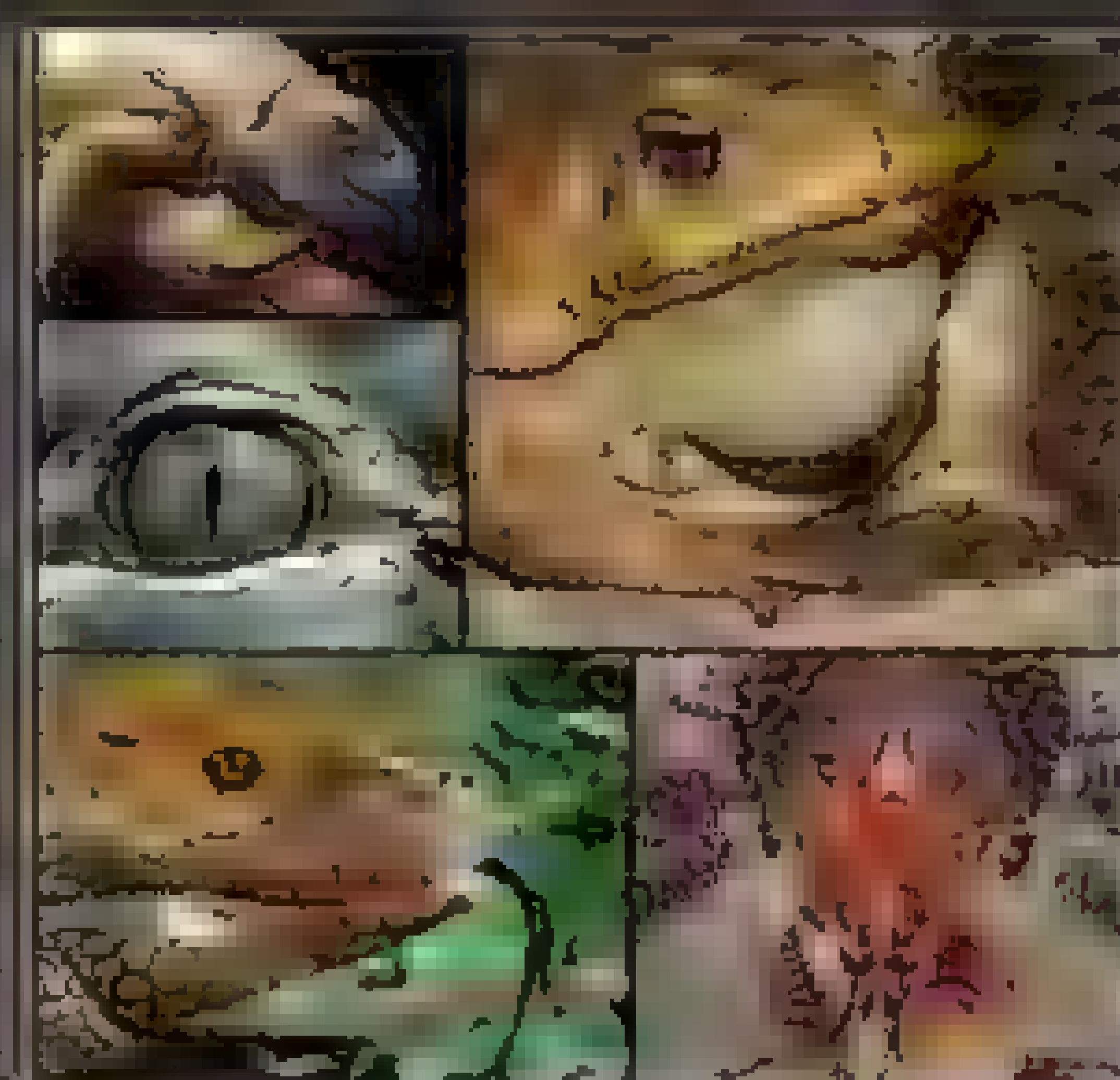
look like?" With the fidelity available to the rest of the team, the concept artist can't just sit back and make inspirational speed-paintings. The challenge now is to pack more realism into our drawings, while still being able to rapidly iterate through ideas.

Photo-collage is a natural solution. The visual information is already in the reference we use. Why not go with the source? So let's get going – you'll thank me after you're done. If you don't use it every day, photo-collage is something every concept artist should be aware of.

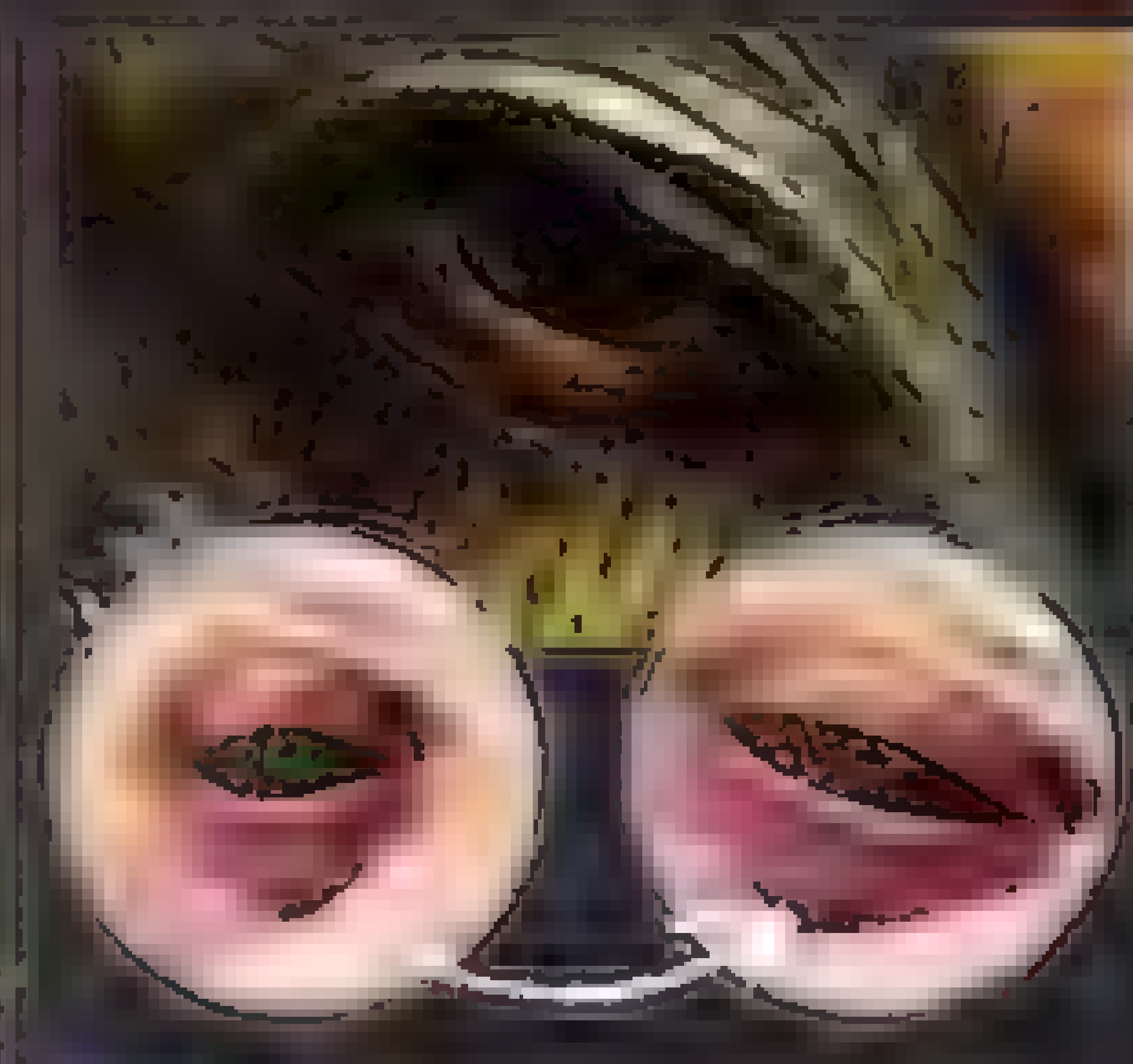
PRO SECRETS



Painting vs collage
Here's a side-by-side comparison of my painting (left) versus photo-collaging. Which is a better work of art is up for interpretation. The question is simply which approach is best for your situation? The collage was quite a bit faster, and it's very specific about skin textures and hair growth. The modellers might need that information. Conversely, if I started drawing individual pores and stray hairs on the painting I feel like I'd lose the charm of the chiselled brushwork. And I'd be out for quite a while.



Getting the photos
Sometimes it's better to grab a camera and shoot what you need, but mostly you can get everything online. If you're doing collage correctly, you shouldn't fall foul of copyright issues. When you manipulate images to the extent that we describe here, you're creating a new work. Just follow the principle of using parts, not the whole, and you should stay legally in the clear. You could also consider buying from a stock photo service. Of course, if you're in doubt, seek further advice.



The Transform stage
There are only three steps that you'll repeat as you build your image: Transform, Layer, Mask and Hue/Saturation. Edit>Free Transform (Ctrl+T) is your standard opening move – check out the video to see it in action. But this might be a handy tip. In order of frequency, I tend to do Edit>Free Transform on every single element; Edit>Transform>Warp on a lot of things; Filter>Liquify on a few things; and Edit>Puppet Warp (in CS5) under rare, special circumstances.



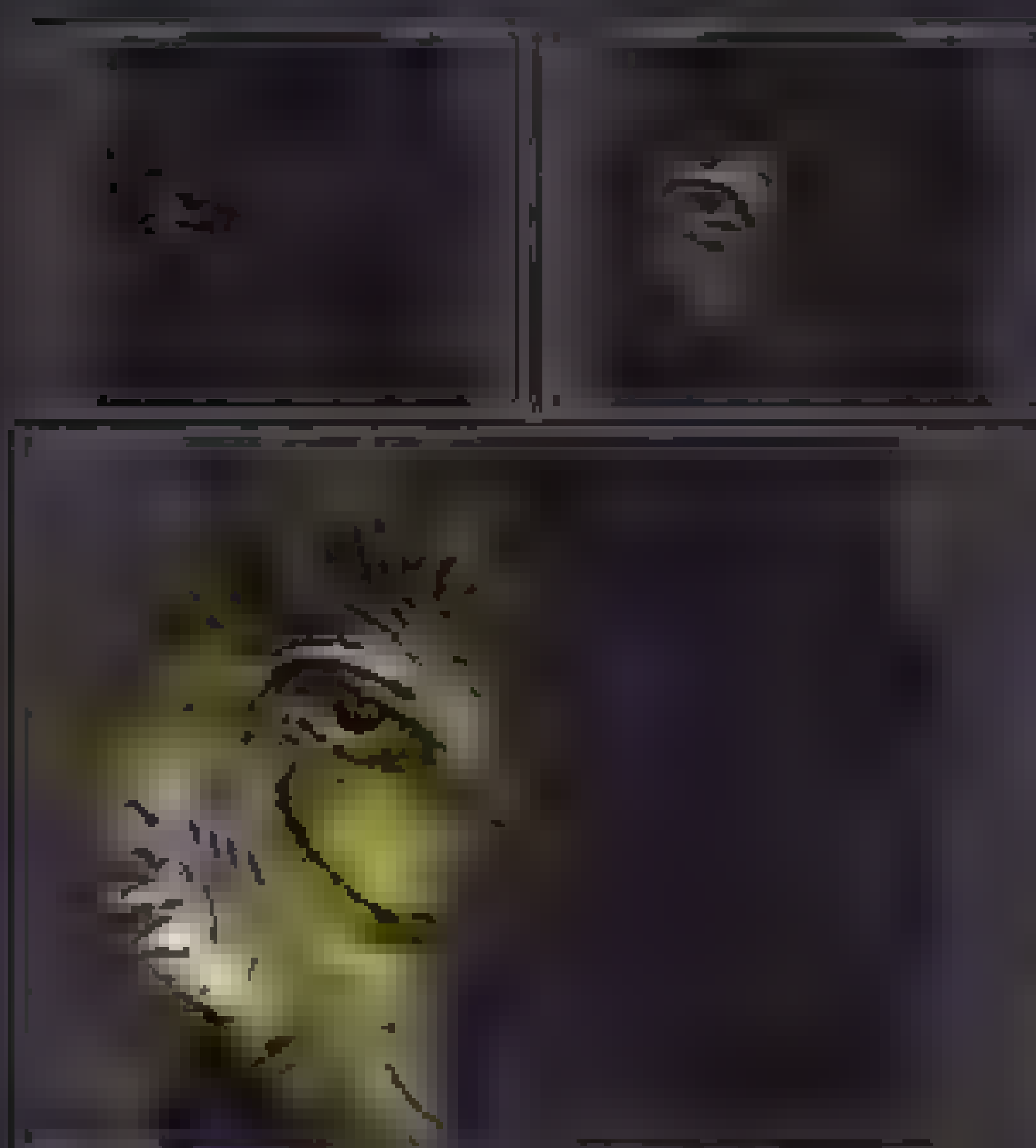
Using Layer Mask

Now, I blend elements with Layer Masks. Almost every photo element has a Layer Mask. A mask enables you to erase what you don't need, but it's non-destructive so you can bring back what you've erased at any time. To add a Layer Mask, click the 'circle in a square' icon on the bottom of the Layers panel. To edit the mask, click the mask icon on your chosen layer, and just paint black for invisible, white for visible. It's that simple.



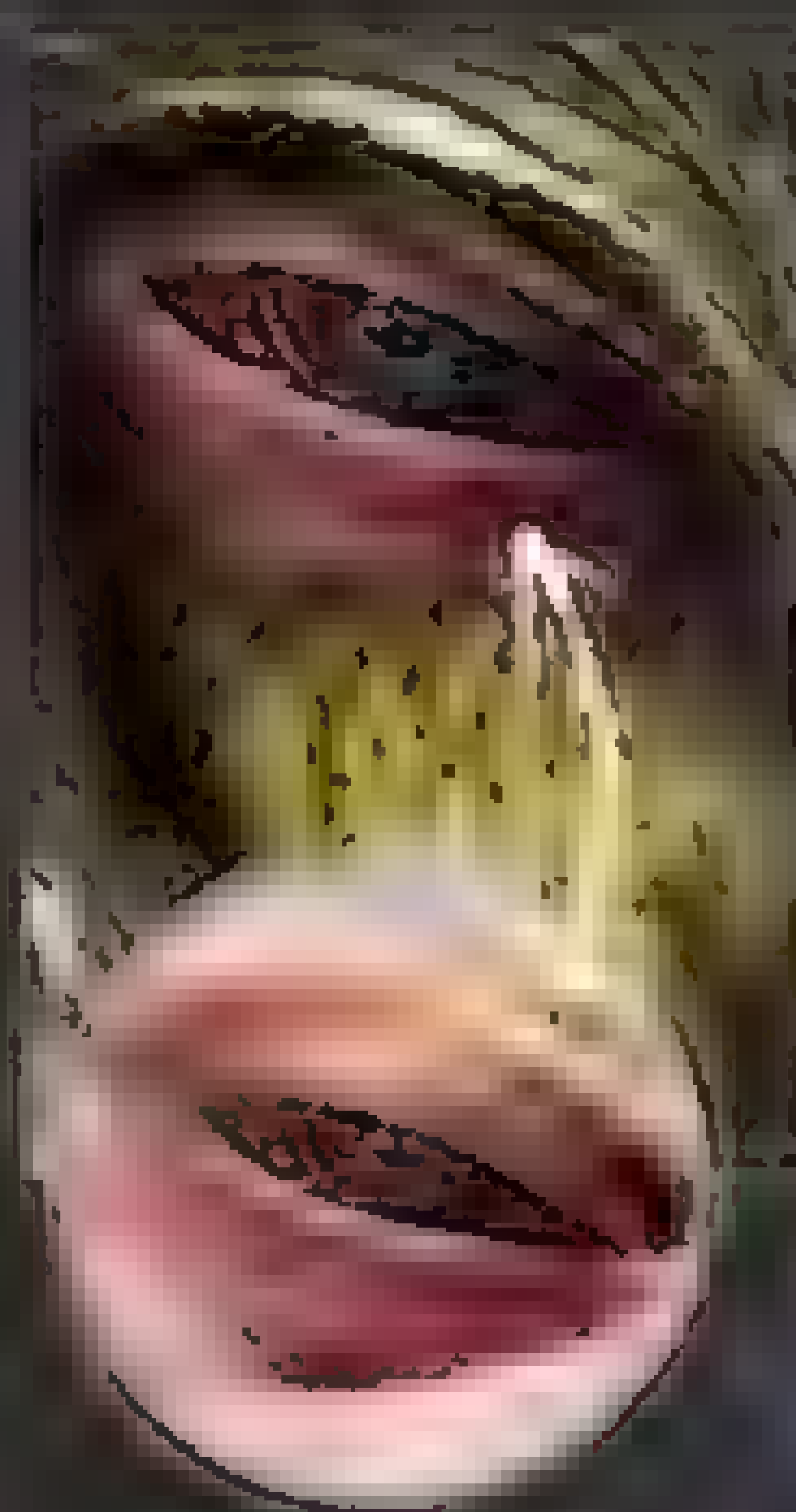
Make initial tweaks

I keep tweaking the pose and fleshing it out with constant horizontal flipping of the canvas, which I've associated with my own shortcut Ctrl+Alt+H. This tweaking is making me lose textures and details, but it's no big deal. They're just useful for establishing the concept in my mind, and few of them will make it to the final image.



Down and dirty

An old boss of mine used to say, 'Everybody likes sausages, but nobody wants to see sausages made.' What he meant was that the process looks so ugly, you might doubt the results. I start a collage the same as I would a drawing: I create a rough scribble to mass out the shape and then just start rendering. When I paint a portrait, I always make that egg shape of the head and establish a jawline, then sketch in the eye and socket, followed by mouth, nose and hair.



Be more specific

When I was prepping my little photo library, I knew that I was going to use reptiles and amphibians – those are the kinds of complex skin textures that scream 'alien life' to the viewer. But I'm also Googling as I go to find specific items that occur to me, like the crab parts in the mouth. I aim to create structures that suggest flesh hanging on a not-quite-human skull. You have to seek out forms in the photos that you can sculpt onto the drawing where you'd normally be modelling with clay. I'm thinking, 'I need a ridge shape here' or 'I need something with smooth bulgy curves', such as the pouch of skin under the eye.

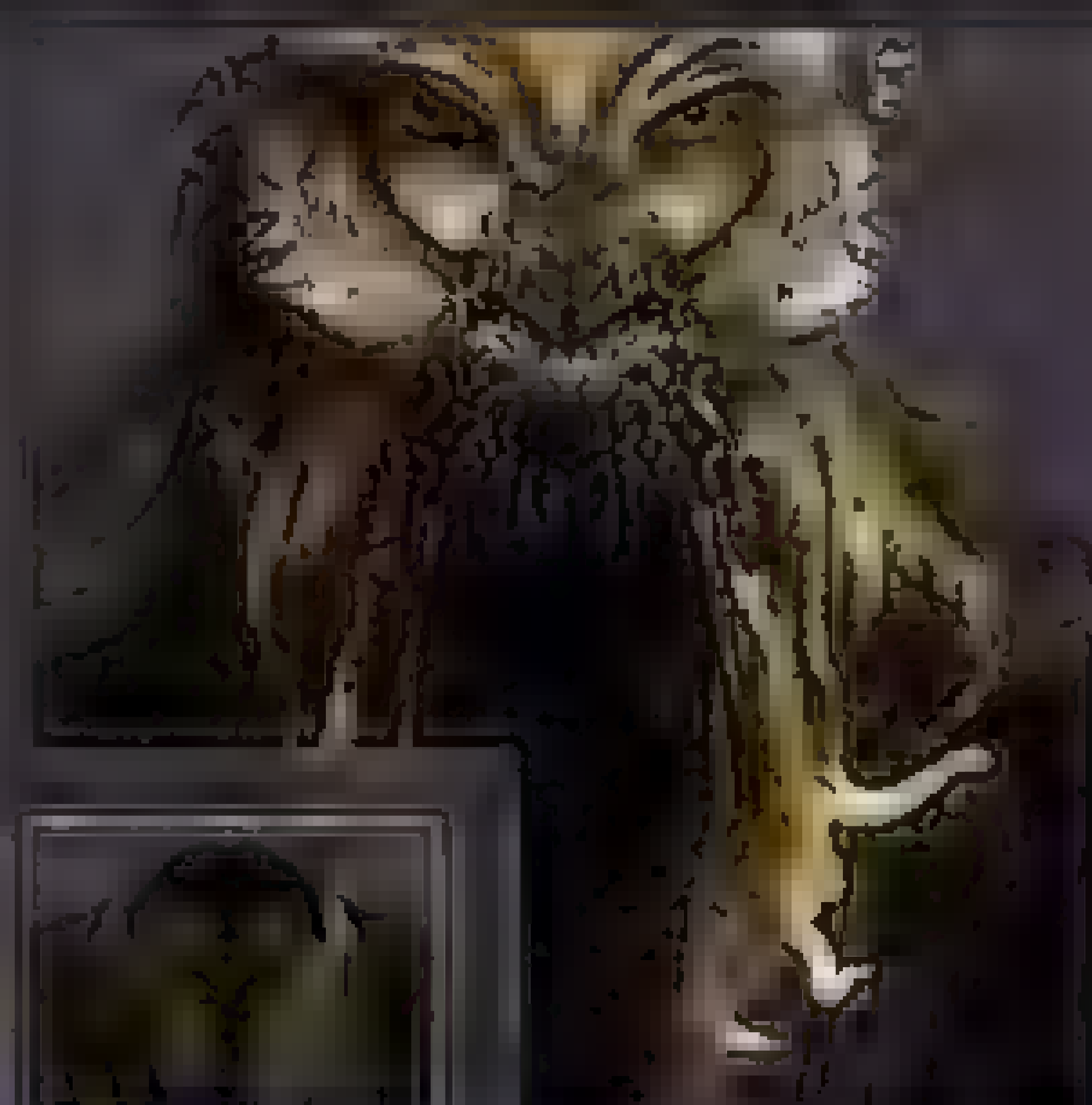


PRO SECRETS

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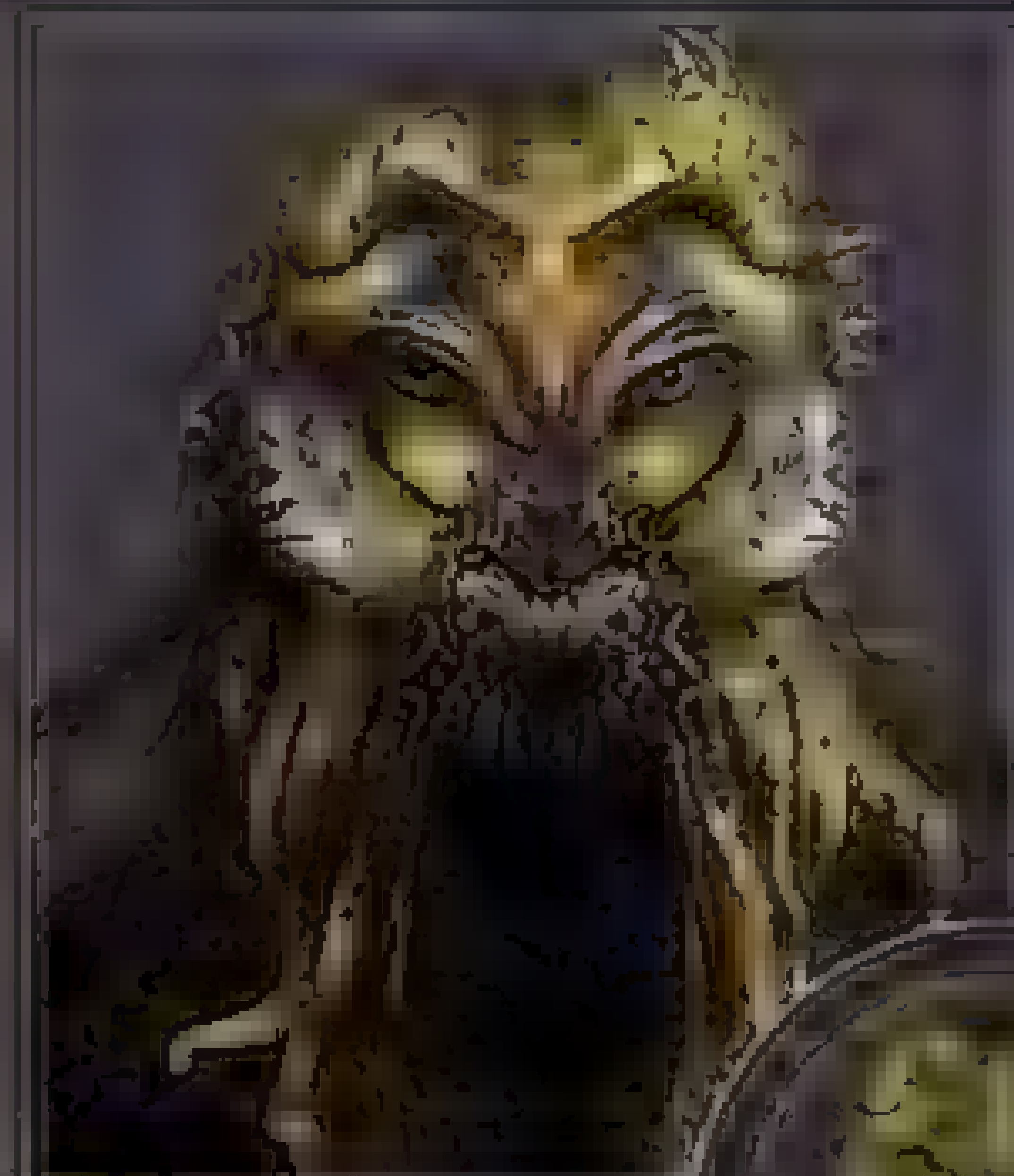
Mirror guidelines

I don't recommend mirroring for anything important because it can look artificial. But if you're in a time-consuming stage, rather than doing the beauty shot, then it's certainly a fast way to build a creature. Many creatures living on Earth have a level of bilateral symmetry. And it's tricky to make something look intelligent if it's entirely asymmetrical. So go crazy on monsters, but keep it bilateral on guys that have emotions. The important thing to remember is not to just leave it perfectly mirrored. Near the end, start adding to one or the other side to break up that mechanical symmetry.



Adding a costume

If you're doing a character with a unique personality, they need personalised clothing that broadcasts their role. I won't go very far with the costume design in this workshop, but it should still be more than a floating head. For expedience, I've borrowed a costume from central casting. It's not unusual when you're designing creatures that you don't have the whole script in front of you, so this isn't as odd a thing to do as it may seem.



Lighting edits

There are always lighting inconsistencies when combining random photos. Your work can come out looking flat, so spend some time hand-painting cast shadows in a uniform direction. Often I'll pick an angle from the upper right and create a shadow side and a light side. Since I've mirrored this image, it's better to choose front lit. I set a new layer set on Multiply and paint in some soft shadows on the underside of the larger forms, and some smaller darks on the deeper, wrinkly bits. I'll often also do an overall Curves or Hue/Saturation changes adjustment layer.





Taking things further

I'm keen to show some more drawing examples, so I used almost the same set of textures to create a second character. I grabbed a tentacle face and body to jump-start the remix, and went for something as completely different, yet within the range of variation that you might see on a real project. I love painting. I'd prefer to take my time and paint this from scratch, but I couldn't have done it in a single evening. There's a lot you'd have to fix to turn this into a finished illustration. But if your goal is to be a concept artist, how can you argue with the speed? Half your concepts are never used anyway.

Extracting lines

When I sculpt or paint I look for places where linear shapes follow the form, particularly along the turning edges of planes. Lines emphasise the structure, and give a nice, drawn quality inside the work. It's natural, then, that I also look for ways to create these structural lines in collage. Here are two examples of parts of frogs that I've isolated and used to create the eyebrow and lower eyelid. You can see plenty of these creases extracted from nature throughout the piece. Like I say, I'd be doing the same thing if I was drawing from scratch, and this shows how much these collages still reflect your drawing style at the end of the process.



13 Extracting surfaces

Flat textures can be found online, but they're not always useful. When I look for a texture element, I'm also considering the curvature of the surface. I choose convex or concave shapes that describe the mass I'm drawing. The patch of scales from this lizard's leg is a great example. The lighting on the curved surface suits the swelling on the forehead. I also look for swatches that have a direction of marks, so I can apply them as I would a passage of brush strokes. Brushwork in painting follows along the form, frequently feathering along the edge of a plane. I like the way the orange mottling on this fish works in this way.

PRO SECRETS

Pick a size

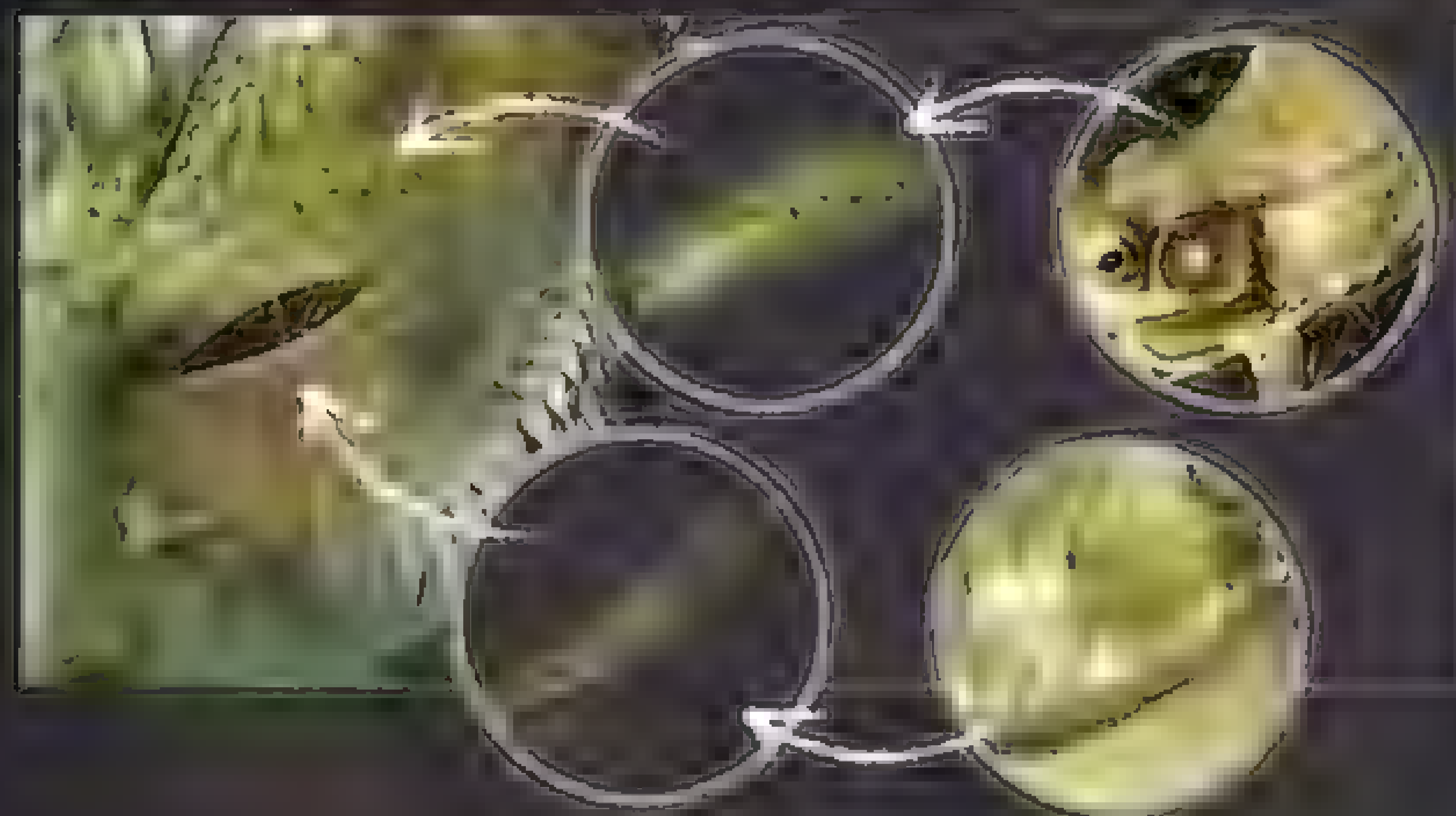
You may know this well. I'm surprised how often

Google Image search



Extracting objects

The third trick, most noticeable here in the tentacles, is the use of entire objects. While the exact right photo can be quite useful, it can also look too obviously pasted on. The lighting might be contradicting the average value you're creating, or the pixel density can be too low. The torso that I used is stretched too far. With the tentacles, in the interest of expediency, I was willing to settle for good enough gets the point across. Then, if this was chosen to go up for presentation, I'd go back and rework them. So that's it! Thanks for reading and I hope photo-collage becomes another weapon in your digital art arsenal!



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Back issues

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Issue 62 November 2010



We go horror crazy, giving top tips on how to paint the most gruesome artworks imaginable. We also interview the celebrated Dungeons & Dragons artist, Todd Lockwood, and game designer, Trevor Truscott lets us have a peek at his Mad Max-Influenced sketches.

Issue 63 December 2010



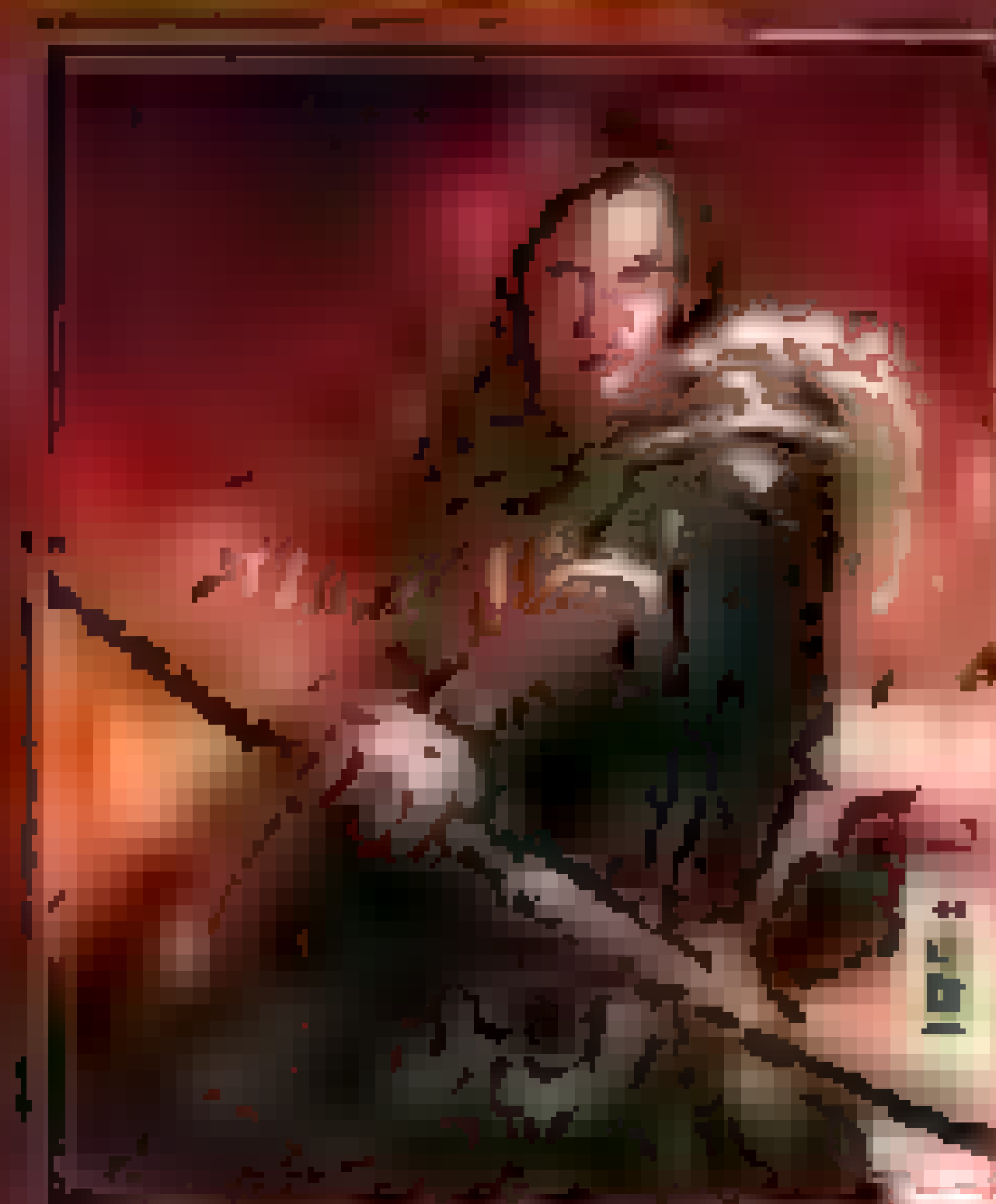
Discover how to create compelling game art with a host of industry experts, including the talent behind Crysis 2 and Fallout. Plus we meet three artists that make up Steamboat Studios and discover how rising star, Luke Mancini made the leap from fan artist to pro.



Issue 66 February 2011

Learn how to incorporate GIMP and SketchUp, both free art programs, into your workflow, be inspired by the techniques used by Ashley Wood and follow Justin Gerard's guide to drawing

Issue 64 Christmas 2010



We celebrate the art of Dungeons & Dragons, and talk to the artists who launched the iconic game. Brush up your storyboarding skills, and follow our Poser and SketchBook Pro workshops. Plus, use your free, full-sized calendar to stay organised during 2011.

Issue 65 January 2011



Blast off into outer space with our A-Z of sci-fi art, from aliens to zero-gravity girls, and read about the techniques used to create art that's out of this world. We also talk to comic legend Moebius about his career and show how to design a TRON-inspired film cycle.

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ImagineFX March 2011

ArtRage

APPLY NATURAL MEDIA TO YOUR ART



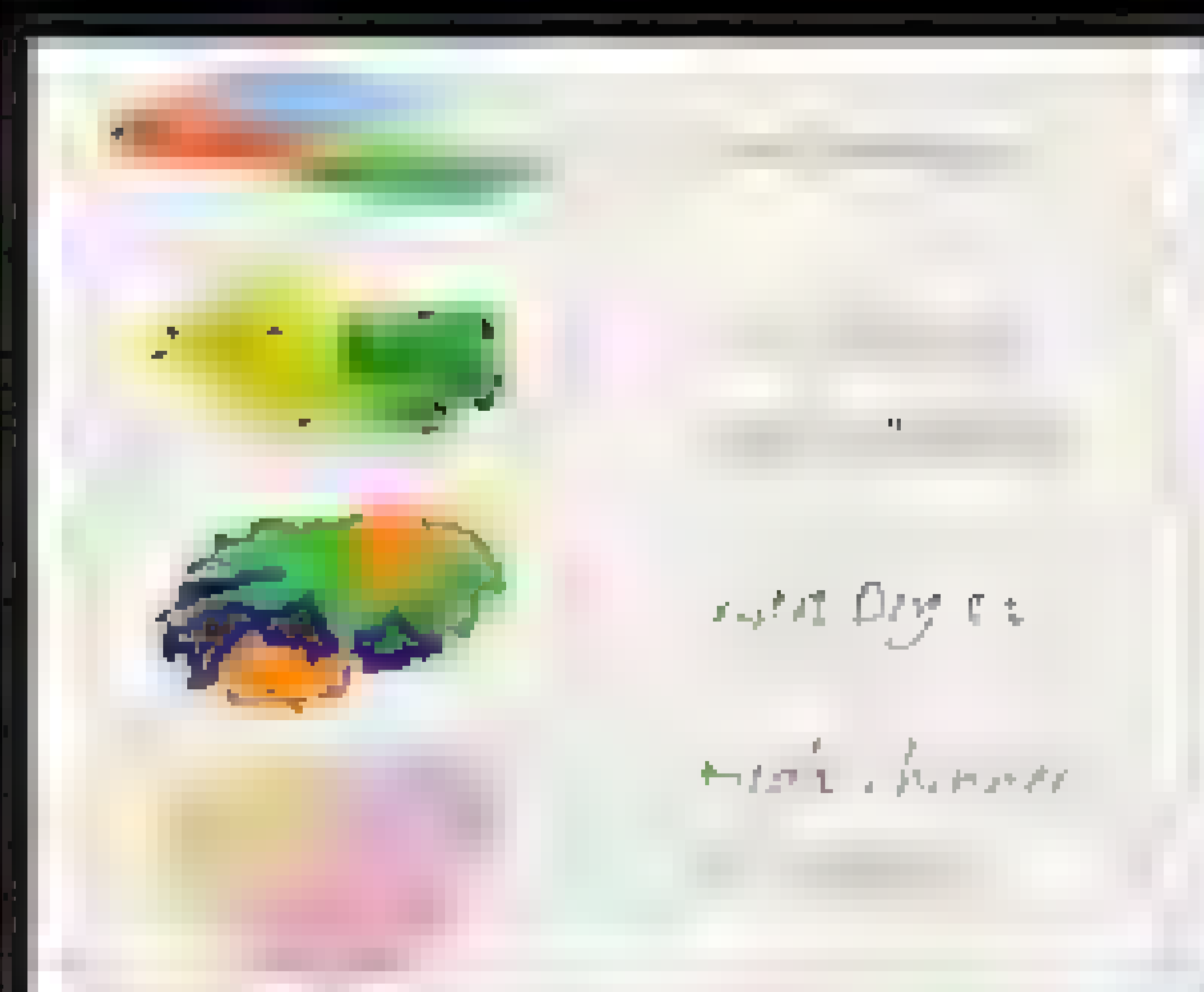
Explore ArtRage Studio Pro's impressive Oil and Watercolour tools and take your paintings to the next level. **Simon Dominic** explains all

ArtRage's main strength lies in its easy-to-use natural media simulation. To get the most out of its painting and manipulation tools, ArtRage employs its own special .PTG file format, which can store extra information about your digital

painting. For example, ArtRage holds paint thickness data for every point on your canvas, which makes for convincing blending and mixing effects. ArtRage also keeps the canvas separate to the paint, meaning that it acts like a real, textured canvas and not just another colour.

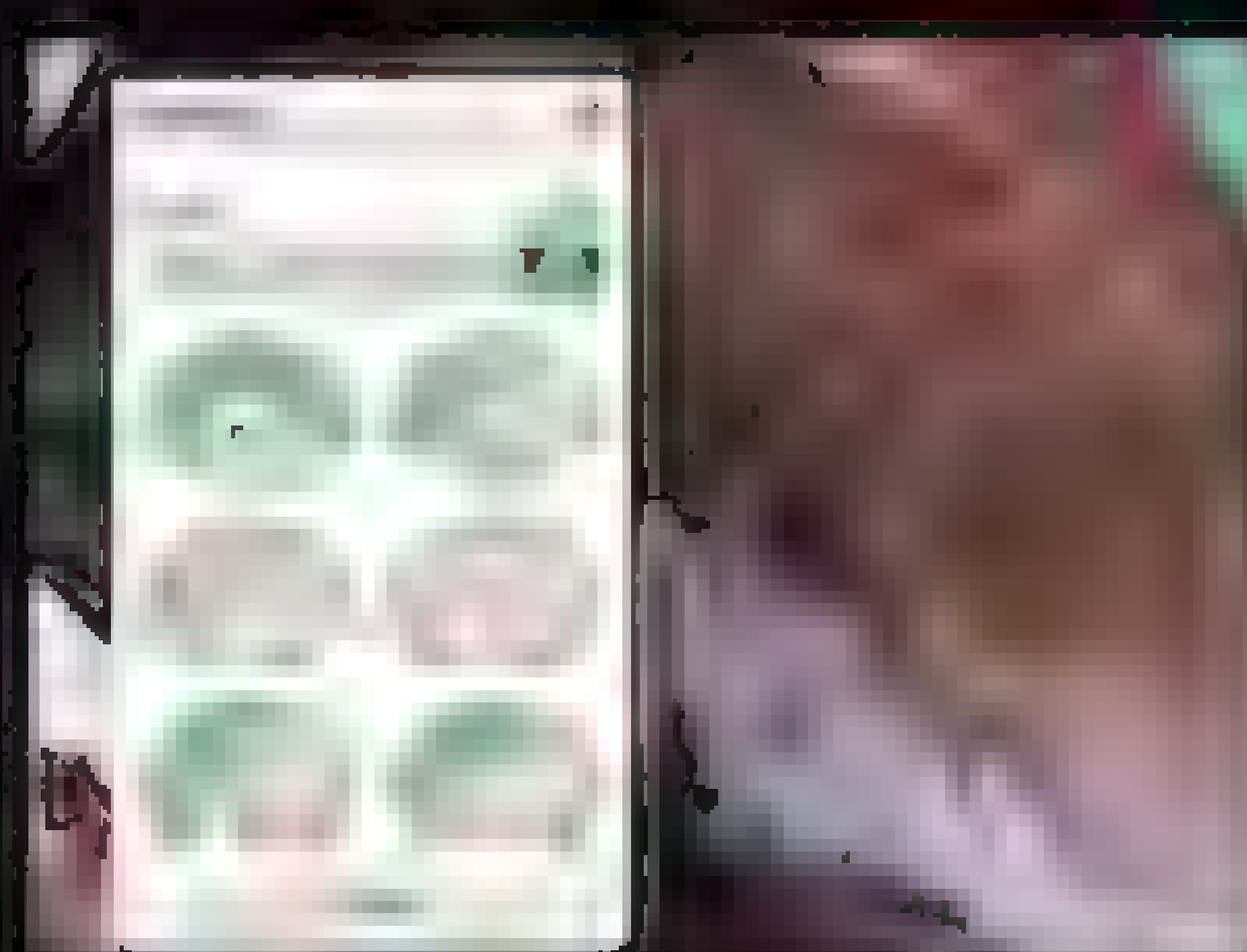
Set your oil paints

First, make sure Tools>Color Options>Real Color Blending is ticked, then select the Oil Brush tool from the Tool Picker menu, bottom left. In the Tool Settings panel, reduce Loading to produce short, dry dabs. Set the Loading to 100% and Thinners to 0% for thick, textured paint. Ticking Insta-Dry prevents paint from mixing, giving a pop art effect. Increase Thinners for a light wash.



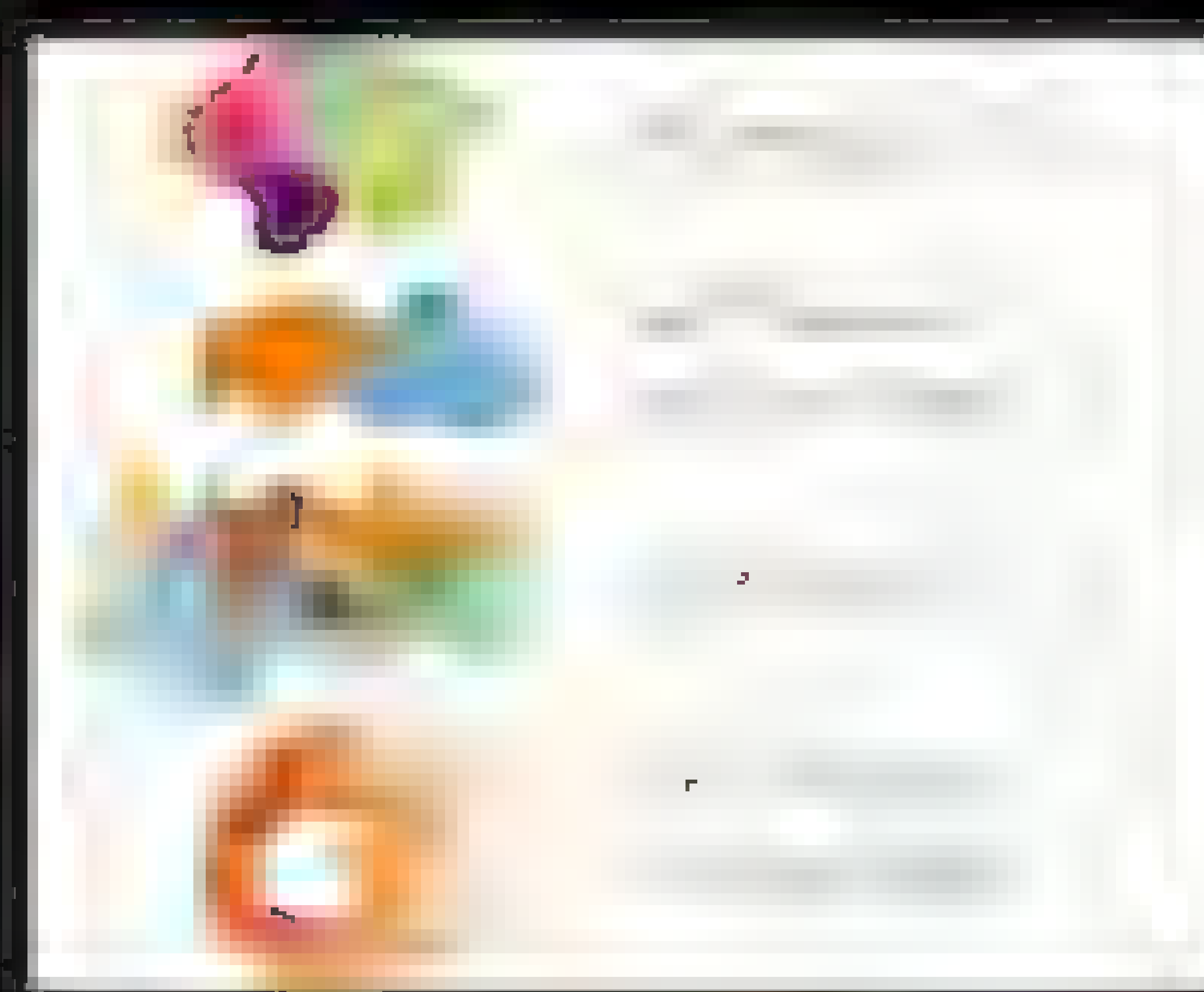
Edit the Palette Knife

Manipulate paint already on the canvas by selecting the Palette Knife tool from the Tool Picker. The thicker the paint on the canvas, the further it'll spread. Select a type from the five options in Tool Settings: Flat, Edge, Soft, Blur or Wet. Flat produces a convincing palette knife effect, while Wet mixes thinners with the paint for some great textured blends.



Tweak watercolours

Select the Watercolor Brush from the Tool Picker. Set the Config dials in Tool Settings to around 50% for strong colours with moderate bleed (mixing). Reduce Thinners and Color Bleed for more compartmentalised colours. With Insta-Dry on you can experiment with a Photoshop-like wash. Setting Thinners to 100% and Bleed to 0% simulates brushing water onto the canvas.



PROFILE



Simon Dominic
Professional
Illustrator
and
Designer

Find out how he has
worked on games like
The Sims and more
at www.simon-d.com

EDIT OILS AND WATERCOLOURS



A. Loading
With this on, you can load paint onto the canvas without mixing it.

B. Thinners
With this on, you can add thinners to the paint, making it more liquid.

C. Loading
With this on, you can load paint onto the canvas without mixing it.

D. Insta-Dry
With this on, the paint dries immediately.

E. Auto Clean
With this on, your brush picks up paint from the canvas and cleans itself.

F. Square Head
With this on, your brush tapers to a point as you move it around.

Watercolours
With this on, the paint bleeds into the canvas, creating a watercolor effect.

G. Thinners
With this on, you can add thinners to the paint, making it more liquid.

H. Color Bleed
With this on, the paint bleeds into the canvas, creating a watercolor effect.

I. Paper Wet
With this on, the paint soaks into the canvas, creating a watercolor effect.

Fundamental skills

THE ART OF DRAWING

PART TWO: PRACTICE

With David reveals how drawing skills can be used on a practical basis, in the concluding part of his workshop series

Artist PROFILE



Now that we've discussed the theory of drawing in part one, let's talk about the practical side of things. How does drawing work in the grind of a real illustration job?

As we mentioned last month, drawing is the fundamental core of good illustration. Without it, your final illustration will be weak. Drawing provides the intellectual framework of an illustration. It's the primary means by which your ideas will be communicated. It also offers an excellent way of exploring

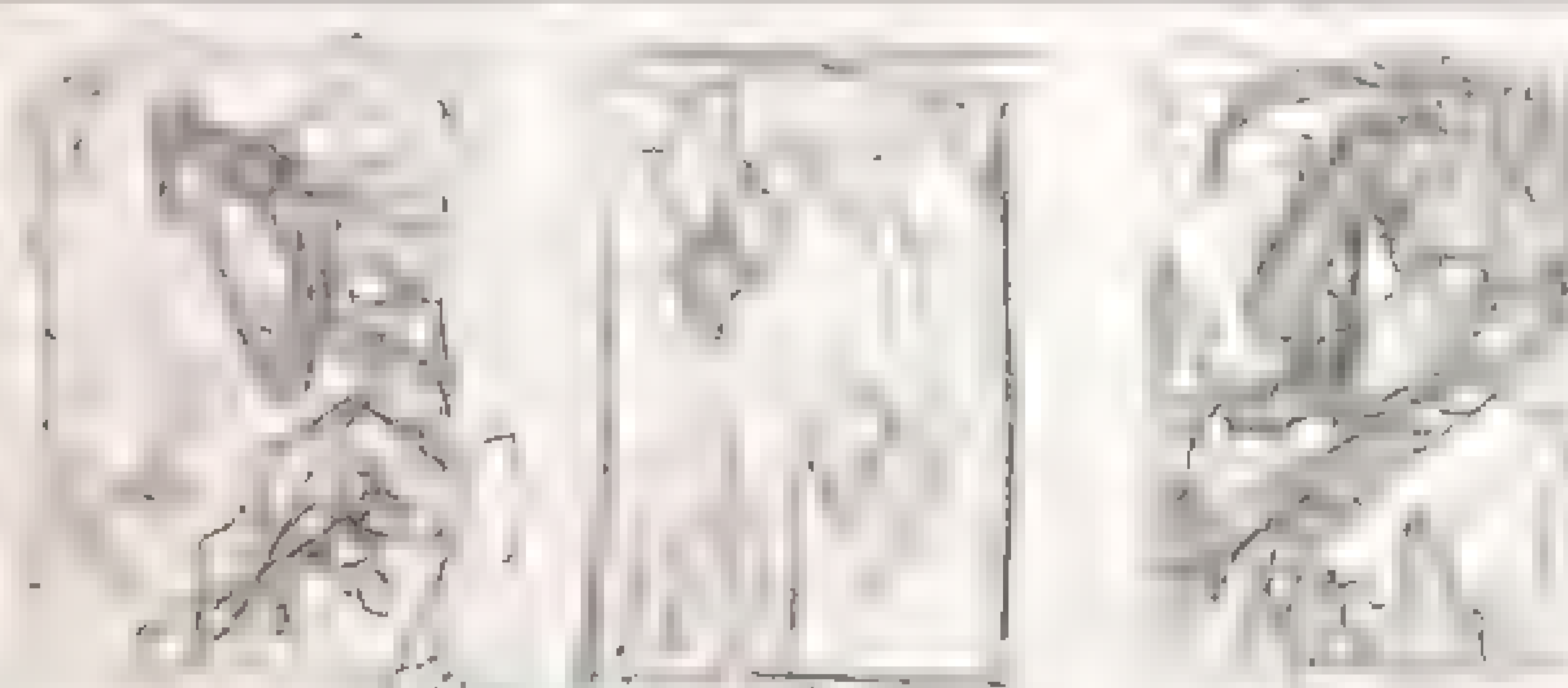
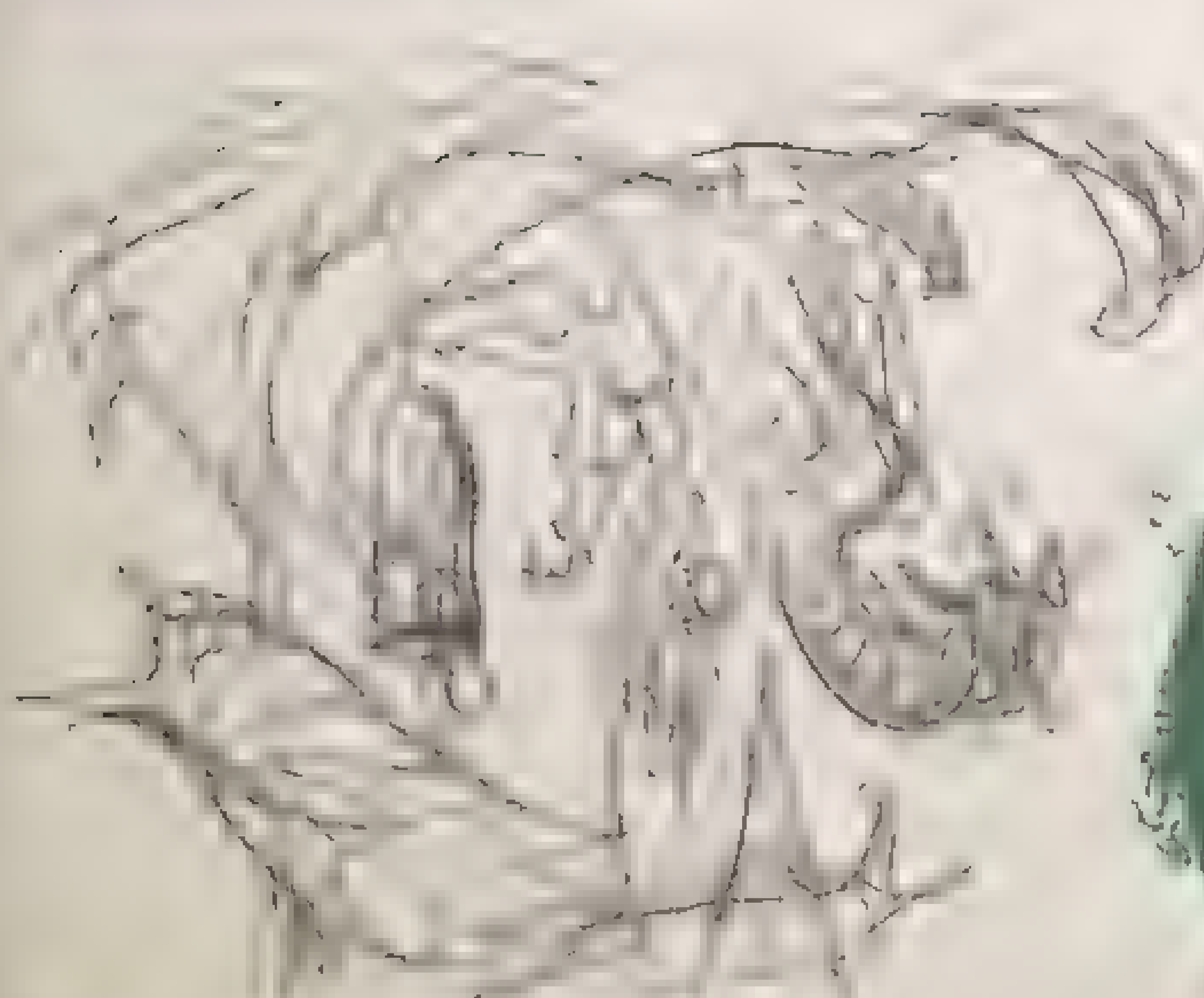
an idea, and slowly refining it down to something truly beautiful, eliminating the errors and weaknesses, and maximising the impact of its strengths.

Picturing the idea

Before beginning your illustration, you have to know what it is you want to do. If you're working for a client then this may already be taken care of. Yet even if you have been given a brief, how you'll show the idea is still a mystery locked inside your head and we must find a way to bring it out. What's the mood of the scene? Who

are its inhabitants? Where is the tension? Wander around in your imagination first. Explore the possibilities mentally.

While technical skill represents the scientific half of art, the idea is part of the emotional half of art – the side that's more personal to you. It's the side that can't be taught scientifically. The technical aspects that we've discussed can be learned by anyone, given enough time and dedication. The ideas, though, are your own and they arise out of every experience you have ever had. So think hard on them before you begin



Produce thumbnails

Produce thumbnails. This is a quick and easy way to explore different ideas and compositions. It's a good idea to produce several thumbnails for each idea, so you can compare and contrast them. This will help you to see which idea is the strongest and which composition is the most effective. Once you have chosen your idea and composition, you can then move on to the next stage of the process.

The human mind

The aim here isn't necessarily to print out exactly what's in your head. The human mind isn't a desktop printer that can spew out what it sees on the monitor. There are layers of emotion, feeling and disconnected ideas that must be assembled together in a logical format for us to meaningfully express them. The ideas are there and our purpose is to carve down through these layers and find it.



Refine thumbnail

After I've drawn a thumbnail that I like, I'll redo it several times, working it slightly different each time. I'll also begin to explore the expressions of my characters, want to home in on the idea's signal in my brain, and to separate what should be there from what shouldn't. I now switch from ink to pencil so I can refine the work. I won't leave this stage until I've a clear representation on paper of what was in my mind to begin with.

First is often best

I never leave the thumbnailing stage until I have a composition that I'm excited about. Often I find that this turns out to be the very first thumbnail that I put down. However, even if you're very excited about your first thumbnail, put down a dozen or so others just to make sure that you have explored all the possibilities.

“The human mind isn't a printer that can spew out what it sees on the monitor”



Sketching the details

After completing my thumbnails, I move on to explorative sketching. In this phase I step away from broader concerns over composition and arrangement, and instead try out ideas for what things might look like with some details. I'm still working purely from my imagination at this point, with no reference except what's already in my head. I try out different positions and expressions to continue to carve down to the core of the idea that's hidden inside my brain.

Digital comp

Occasionally, I find it helpful to flesh out the barebones idea contained within the refined thumbnail. This happens mostly in complex scenes involving architecture and perspective. For most projects I prefer to do this digitally in Photoshop. I'll scan in my thumbnails and sketches, and then paint over them digitally, cutting and moving elements as necessary. I enjoy working digitally because it allows for a great deal of fast experimentation and I can try out different ideas in far less time than it would take to redraw them several times by hand.



Photo reference

I try not to rely too heavily on photo-reference. When I do, it begins to look too eerily perfect, and there's a dangerous line that's crossed where an image no longer looks like it's from an imagination, but rather like the product of a camera. However, photo-reference is indispensable for good illustration and it's important that you're familiar in detail with all of the elements you intend to illustrate. To do this, I prefer to draw and memorise the major elements of my reference so that I can recall the construction more naturally later on. Photo-reference is at its best when it's serving as an inspiration. I gather a great deal of it for every project, I study it and then tend to put it away until the very end, where I then bring it back out to make sure I haven't made some terrible mistake.

A note about dragons

Dragons are a popular subject for many artists, and I have a lot of reference material on them. I find that the most interesting dragons are those that are not just big and scary, but also have a lot of personality. I like to see dragons that are intelligent, cunning, and even a little bit charming. I also like to see dragons that are not just fire-breathing monsters, but also have other abilities, like flying, swimming, or even talking. I find that the most interesting dragons are those that are not just big and scary, but also have a lot of personality.

Studies from reference and from life

To help memorise forms and yet avoid having our images look too eerily perfect, we do studies from our reference. As we discussed in part one this helps to gain a solid understanding of the construction of those elements we hope to communicate in our illustration. It also enables us to communicate them with a more natural feeling to them. It makes sense to do studies primarily on detail areas and focal points. Elements such as faces, hands, and objects or designs that'll have to withstand a certain amount of scrutiny are the most important to focus on.

“Photo-reference is at its best when it's serving as an inspiration”

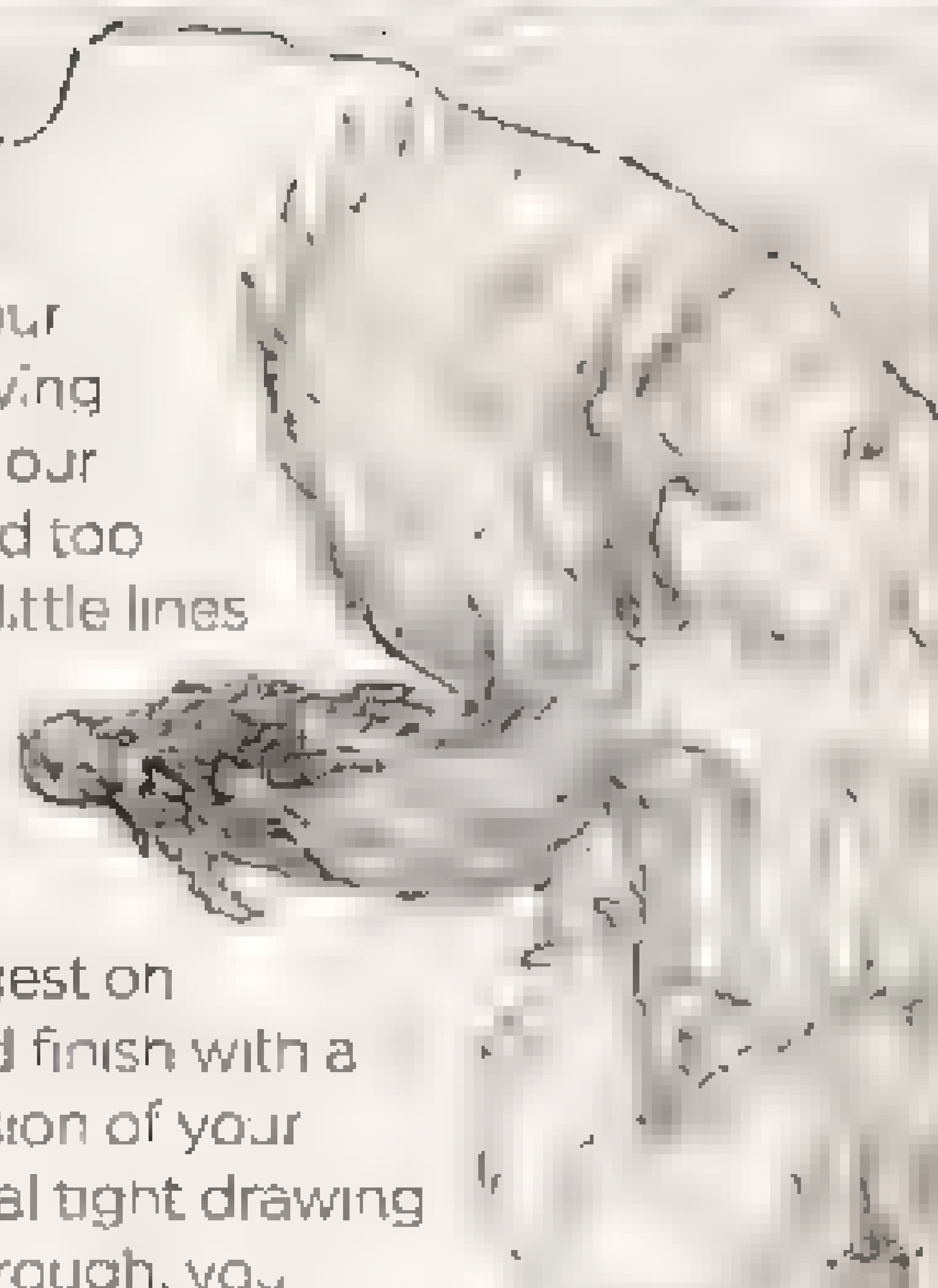
Experimentation

There are a thousand different directions you could take your illustration and each subtle change will make it tell a new story. This experimentation can be a source of procrastination – a way of putting off tackling the final drawing – but it's worth it in spite of the danger. It's good to try different ideas at this stage, where you're more engaged in the details and the nuances of expression on your characters. Yet keep an eye on your original thumbnails. Try to find what it's about that original idea that you found so appealing and try to play it out in these different ideas.



Rough drawing

Now's the time to transfer our comp and all our studies into the rough drawing. We're still carving down to our original idea, so don't spend too much time trying to refine little lines and shadows. Your rough should still look rough. Your main aim here is to nail down proportions and placement and give a suggestion of overall detail. You should finish with a more detailed, cleaner version of your comp, ready to do your final tight drawing. After having finished your rough, you should only be altering small details. There should be no drastic changes after this step.

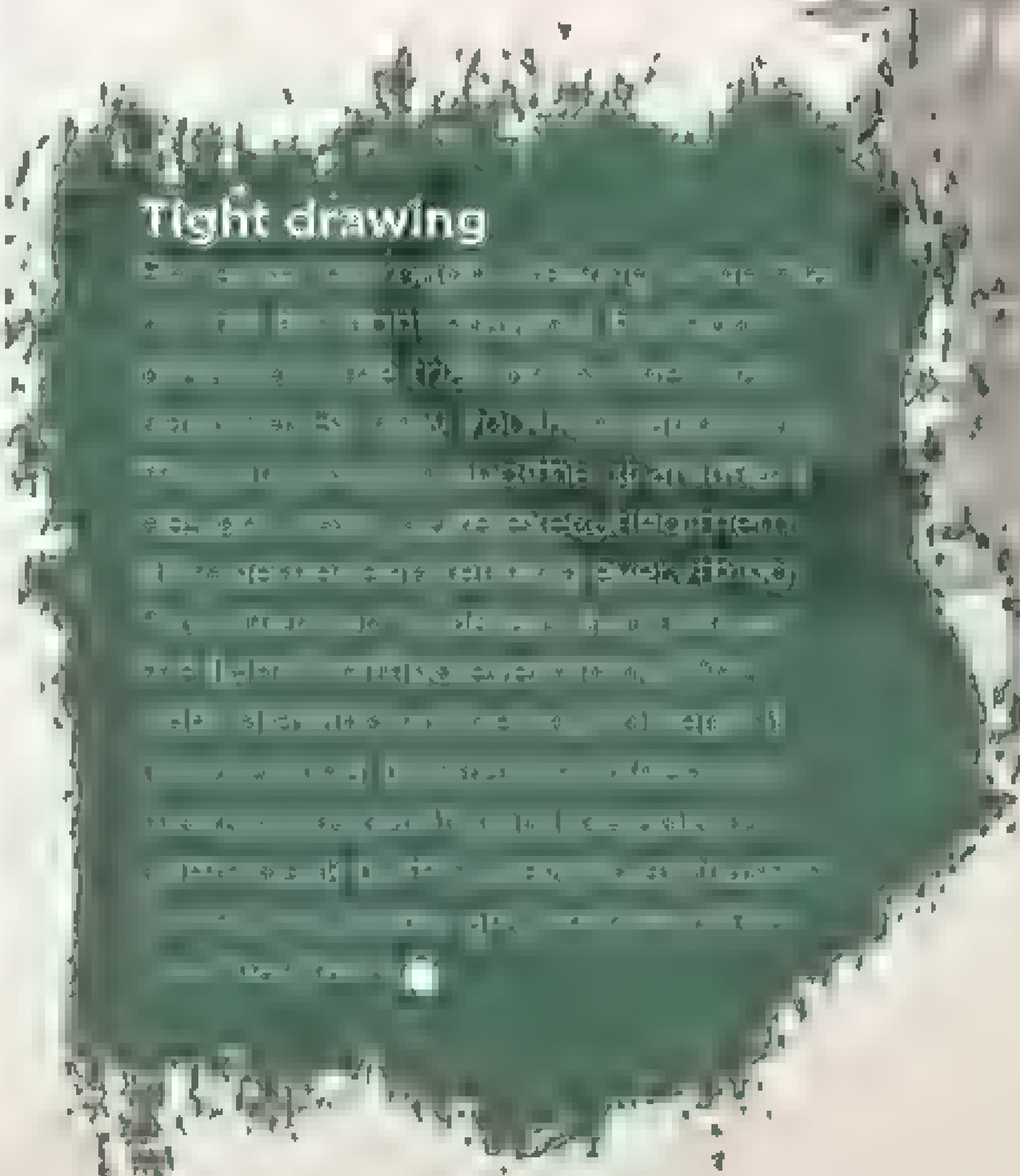


Drastic changes

...but sometimes disaster strikes. And this is exactly why we do a rough drawing, so that these moments of terrible disaster don't happen in the final painting. The rough reveals the problems in our composition and helps us to correct them. In this case, I finished my rough drawing and realised that something was wrong, and that I had somehow drifted from my original idea. The dragon somehow lacked presence. He was looking off and for some reason this was pulling me down and out of the composition. After having done my studies I knew what I would need to do to fix this.

Tight drawing

The tight drawing is the final stage of the drawing process. It is a more refined and detailed version of the rough drawing. It is the drawing that you will use as a reference for the final painting. It should be a clear and accurate representation of your original idea, with all the proportions and placement of the features nailed down. It should be a drawing that you can look at and say, 'This is what I want to paint.'



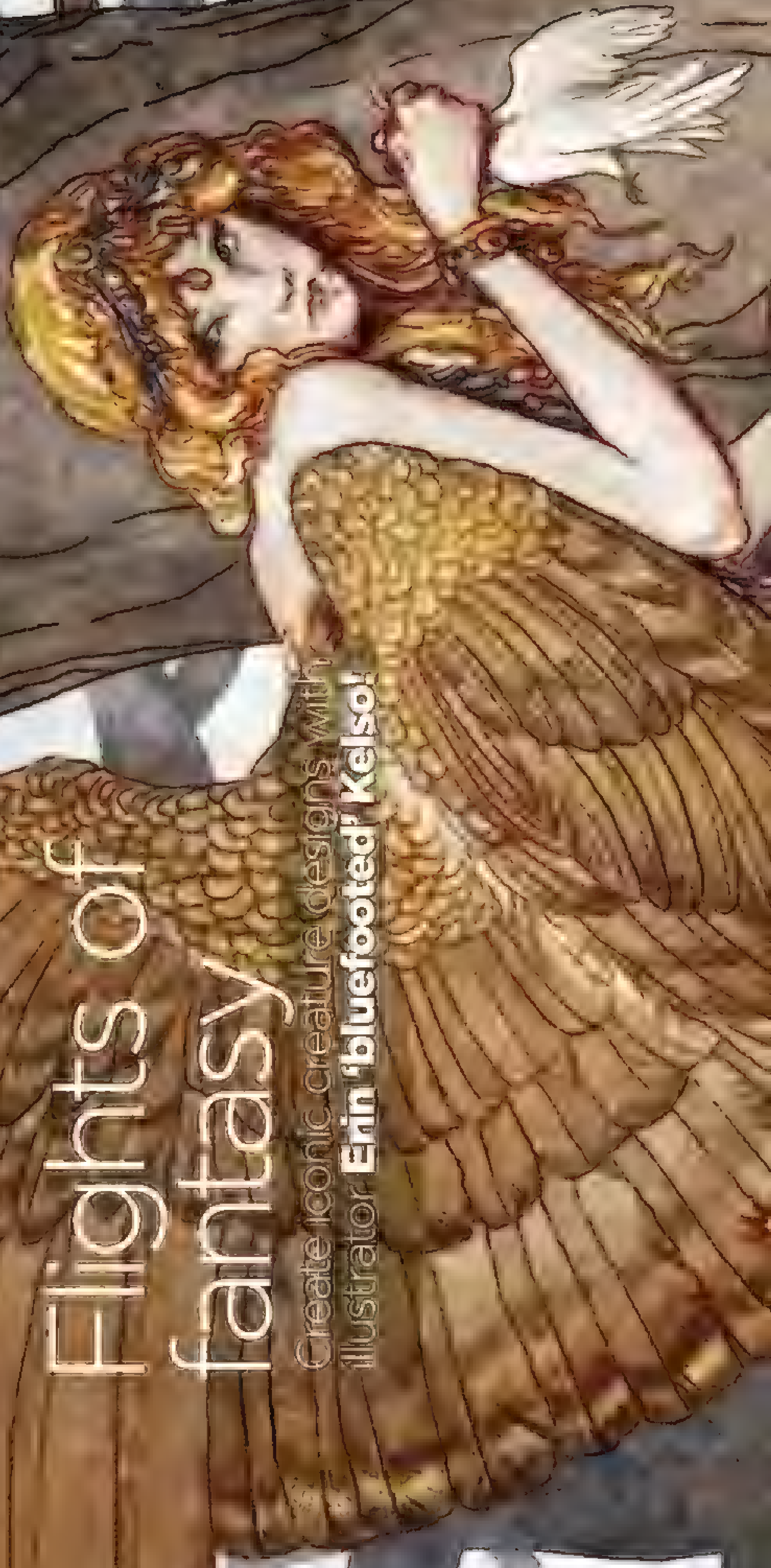
Next month in...

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

Flights of fantasy

Create iconic creature designs with
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Throw out the rulebook!

Sticker Punch concept
artist Joel Cheang tackles
traditional fantasy themes,

Art from book

Create detailed sci-fi concept
ships that have a lived-in look
with the help of Ian McQue.

Abandon creature norms

Let Rocksteady's Kan Muftic
tame your creature design
fears once and for all!

Plot from the past

Ex-Disney artist Craig Sellars
reveals how mixing old genres
with new reaps rewards.

ISSUE 68 ON SALE 8 MARCH 2011

Painter & Photoshop

GET MORE OUT OF PAINTER'S BRUSHES

PROFILE

John Duddle

COUNTRY: Wales



After seven years, Jenny left the games industry to go freelance. He's

just finished work on Aardman's next movie. www.duddlebug.com

DVD Assets

The relevant files are on your DVD in the Jonny Duddle folder in the Workshops section.

Don't be put off by Painter's complex-looking brush system. **Jonny Duddle** says they're good for a multitude of tasks

I used to work exclusively in Photoshop, and whenever I dared to venture into Painter I'd spend hours trudging through the mind-boggling number of brushes without getting any work done. Now and again I'd find a brush I loved, but ten minutes later I'd forget the name and never find it again. Painter IX sat in my dock like a dark secret that I only fiddled with when I had nothing better to do. But in 2006 ImagineFX asked me to

do a Painter workshop and I thought I'd ought to take it a bit more seriously.

Fast forward five years and I use Painter 11 every day. I love how the brushes interact with the colours of the canvas, the enormous colour picker and the variety of brushes, especially now that I've whittled them down to a few favourites in my trusty custom palette.

For this workshop, I'm going to describe how I use Painter. The subject matter is probably less important than the

process, which runs along the same lines in almost every picture I paint. But I've been working on some ideas for a steampunk character, and it seems like the ideal subject matter for using a variety of brushes and getting all painterly. There's a very famous picture of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, stood by the launching chains of his ship, The Great Eastern. I've always loved this picture and it'll be the perfect inspiration for a boy, a robot and some very big chains

ON THE DVD WORKSHOP BRUSHES

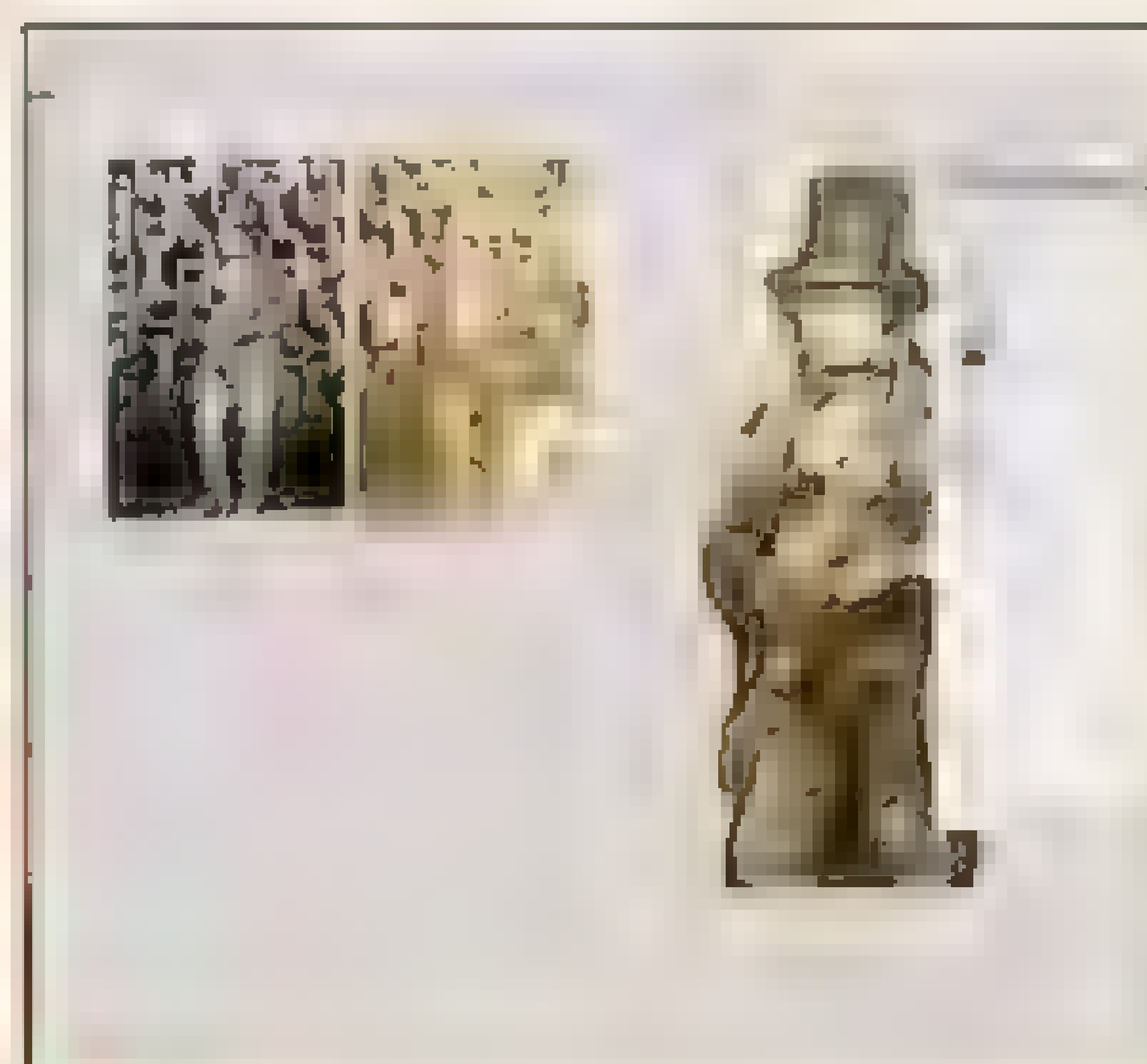
PAINTER

PAINTER

This is my favourite brush. I like the way it blends with the colour beneath it and the oval brush is set up to angle in line with the direction of your Wacom pen.

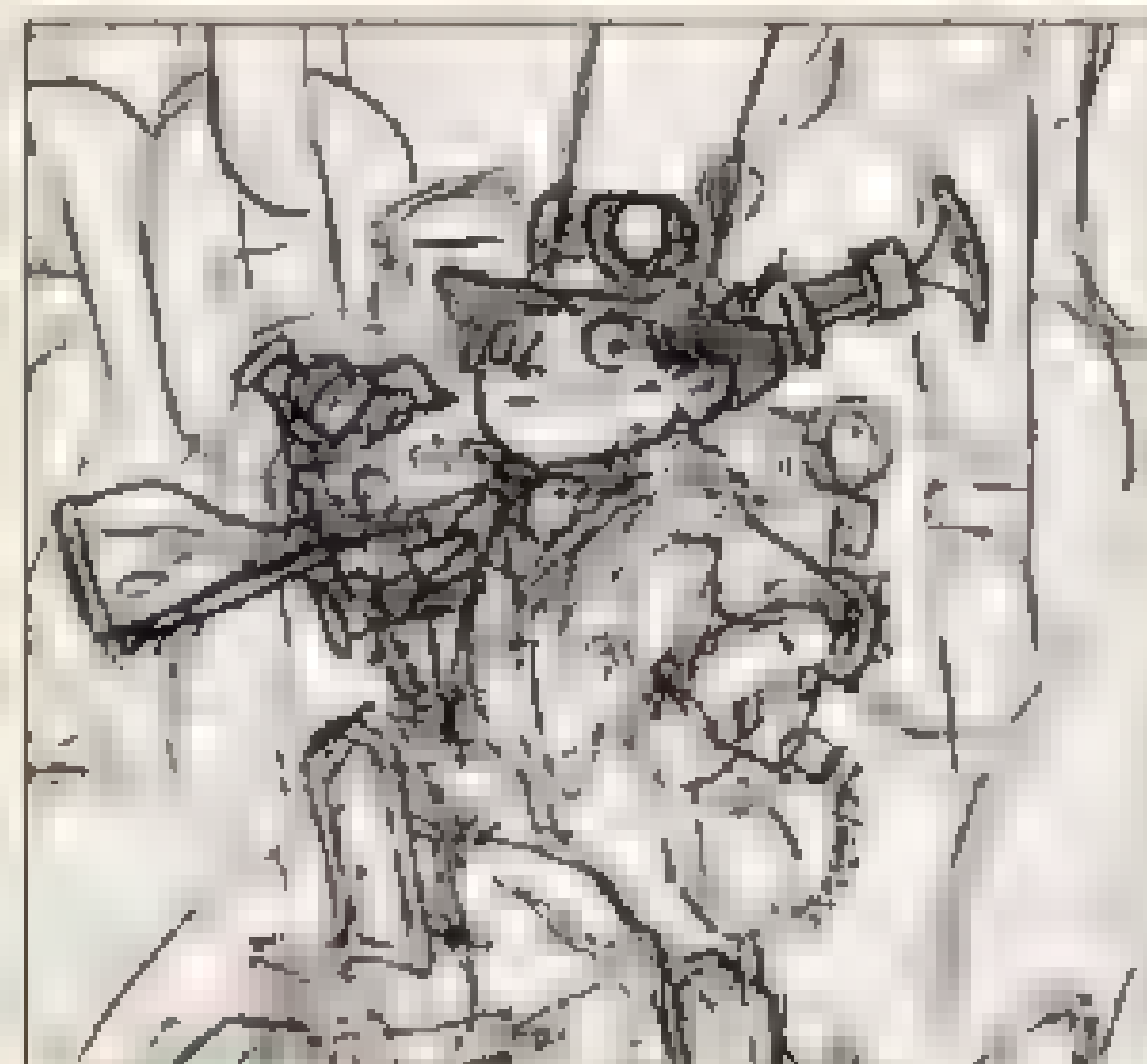
REAL FAN SHORT

The Real Bristle brushes were introduced with Painter X with the aim of replicating the natural movement of the artist's brush. I don't think they quite manage that, but they do give a nice swathe of bristly paint.



1 Using a cardboard background

I don't like working against a bright, white background. It's just not helpful to be looking at a big, white space when trying to start the painting process. To give me a neutral base to work on, I scan the cardboard back of an A4 sketchbook at 300dpi and drag it in as a layer. This also gives me a nice texture to work against. Although much of this real-world background will, of course, be obscured by the painting, some areas will show through the colour work. It also forms the basis of a more interesting surface



2 Getting ideas down in sketch form

This may be a Painter tutorial, but I start off in Photoshop. I use one of Photoshop's dry media brushes – Conte Pencil – for 90 per cent of my sketching. I've tried many of Painter's pencils, but I'm not as comfortable using them. Yet my main gripe is how Painter displays my image, especially zoomed out, for drawing. With the most recent versions of Painter and Photoshop, files can be easily taken back and forth between the two programs and so I think it's pointless to struggle in one when you know the other better suits a particular stage in your process



3 Tweaking the composition

With the main elements sketched out, I use Photoshop's transform tools to make small adjustments. I use the Lasso tool (L) and Free Transform (Edit>Transform>Free Transform) to select areas and make changes here and there. Our young hero is a bit too low, so I move him up, along with the wreckage of the robot. I adjust his standing leg slightly until I feel better about his weight distribution. I'll be able to do more during the painting stage and I rarely get the sketch perfect before getting stuck in, so I'm ready to move into Painter





4 Adding tone

I'm lucky with this painting in that I have a great photo reference. And I start off by adding a tonal wash to the image using the Digital Watercolour Coarse Mop brush. This is all very rough and ready; I'm just working into the cardboard scan with various sepia tones, trying to develop the form in the chains, the fallen robot and the kid. It's also possible to go back and lighten areas with the Digital Watercolour brush, by painting softly, at least until you close the file



5 Fixing the line art

With some basic tone in place I tidy up the line art a little bit. I could do this in Painter, but open the file in Photoshop because I can perform this task quicker. I've got the line art in three layers, and I use a layer mask to get rid of unnecessary lines in the background chains. I also tidy up the kid a bit. When erasing I use the same brush tip, the Conte Pencil, as I used for the drawing

6 Splitting into layers

While in Photoshop I break the image up into three main elements: the hero, the robot and the background, for development in Painter. I lasso a selection around the boy, then select the cardboard layer and duplicate an area as a new layer. I also create a Multiply layer and add a tinge of colour to the figure. I merge these layers to form a flat layer with just the boy. Then I repeat the process with the robot. This leaves me with three opaque layers.



7 Painting chains

I'd like to get the background to a reasonable level of finish to form a basis for painting the foreground. For the chains I use Flat oils from the Oils category, Real Oils Short and Real Fan Short from the Real Bristle category, Wet Gouache Round and a brush called Don's Grainy Water that comes courtesy of Don Seegmiller. These five brushes are the mainstay of my Painter arsenal. I tweak the settings sometimes, but create more than 80 per cent of my Painter work with these brushes. For the chains I also use the Fine Feathering Oils brush to work in some more saturated sepia tones.



8 Applying blend modes

I darken the edges of the chains to focus attention on the boy. I'm a big fan of blend modes, of which Multiply is the most useful. I use it for adding colour, isolating line art in scanned images and for shadows. In this case I'm darkening large areas and I use the Airbrush on a large setting. I start off with a Soft Airbrush, then switch to the Broad Wheel Airbrush, which will add a bit of texture to the shadows at the bottom of the chains



9 Painting the boy

I feel quite disciplined for doing so much on the chains – I usually pile into the characters first because they're the most fun to paint. I use a combination of Flat Oils and Wet Gouache Round brushes to get going on the boy. The cardboard gives a nice 'mucky chin' effect, so I leave that to suggest the grime that's collected on his face. At this stage I'm not too precious about the brush strokes and everything's painted a bit chunkily.



Headset Full screen
On a PC, On a Mac, I like to work full screen. It hides any distraction on the desktop, and I can move around the image more easily.

PRO SECRETS

Brush creator

Most of the brushes on my custom palette are standard Painter II brushes apart from a couple I downloaded after buying Don Seegmiller's book, *Advanced Painter Techniques*. I do change the settings now and again and the Brush Creator is great for playing around with settings. The preview window enables you to see how the changes affect the brush, and the Randomizer and Transposer provide interesting variations.



10 Developing the character

As the painting develops, I use smaller brushes. I'm still using the same two brushes for most of this, but use the bracket keys to control the size of the brush. I use chunky brushes to work out the main planes of the face, jacket, hands and the various accessories. Then I shrink the brush down a bit and try to pick out the more important detail. I do a lot of local colour picking, using the eyedropper to pick existing colours on the canvas, to help bring harmony to the palette



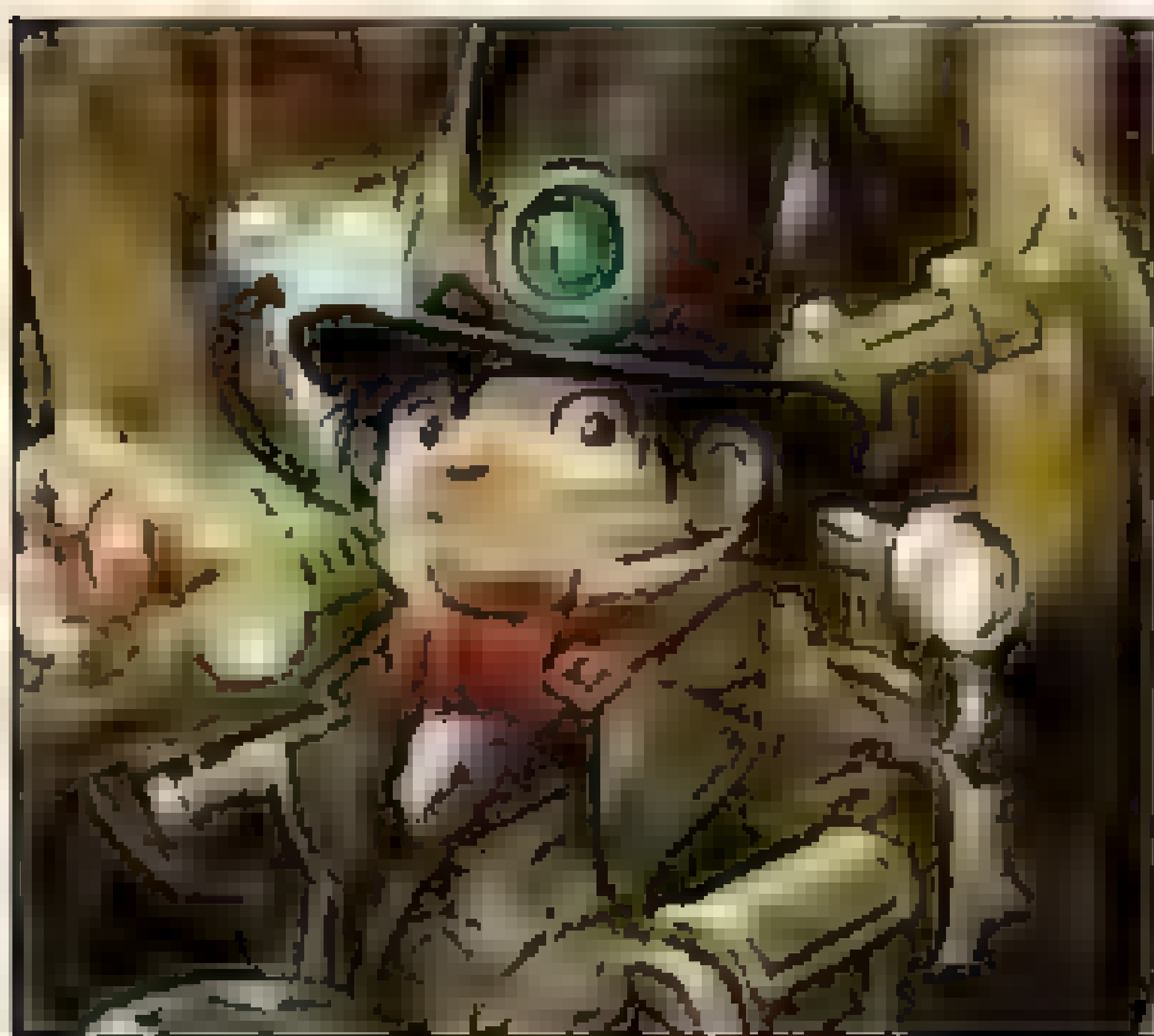
11 More tweaks

I'm not happy with the boy's pose. His legs seem a bit too short and he doesn't appear to be supporting his weight properly. So I open the file up in Photoshop. I often create a single colour layer that I can use to isolate elements within a painting. I wouldn't do much painting against this because it's best to paint in context, but for checking out a pose, or getting rid of artefacts a blank layer is invaluable. I use the Transform tool and address my issues with his legs, save the file and head back to Painter.



12 Tackling the robot

The robot gives me the chance to work with some chunky brushes and play around a bit. I'm not looking for a super-rendered robot – I'm trying to suggest a jumble of parts and the impression of form. I work with big brushes for most of the robot, with a smaller brush to add the a few areas of detail. These additions should make the eye think there's more going on in the image than is actually there.



13 Detailing

In contrast, as the focal point of the painting, the boy needs more detail. I use the reference to add accessories such as the pocket watch and for some help with the folds and creases in the clothing. I paint some stripes on his trousers because I find stripes and pattern can be a great way of defining form. I also add some cast shadows on a Multiply layer with low opacity, which was created while painting the robot.



14 Introducing brass

I find some online reference for the brass. None of the reference has much to do with steampunk armour and guns, but it's useful to get an idea of colour, in the brass itself and its reflections. One of the benefits of creating stylised work is that I don't have to worry too much about accuracy. The drawing can be a bit wonky and I don't have to achieve the same realism with things like reflections and perspective, that would stand out a mile in a realistic rendering.



15 More details

I work into the stock of the rifle, and refine details in the costume and armour. I use the Tapered Eraser brush to tighten the silhouette, while leaving some edges softer and less crisp. From the outset I've been planning to add some brightly coloured liquid to the jar fixed to the rifle. This will be yet another element drawing the eye to the boy's face and also gives me an opportunity to brighten up the almost monochromatic palette.



16 A hint of greenery

I paint in a turquoise liquid and start adding colour to the areas affected by the glow from the liquid. I'm cheating a bit to get the look I want. Some colours don't transfer well to CMYK, so when I next take the image into Photoshop, I 'soft-proof' (Cmd+Y) the image to see how it's going to look with the colour conversion it'll need for print. I add a smoking trail from the end of the rifle and a green fog to frame my hero's feet.



PRO SECRETS

Create a custom palette

Painter has a daunting number of brushes, but it's easy to create a custom palette. With a brush selected, click the icon in the toolbar and drag onto Painter's desktop. You can move the icons around within the palette and include other tasks and menu items. You can organise your custom palettes by going to Window > Custom Palettes.

The Studio
Display the Mixer palette
Ctrl+2 (PC) Cmd+2 (Mac)
The mixer palette is great for mixing colours and making beautiful gradients.

17 Levels and final adjustments

With the painting pretty much done, I bring in another paper scan for the background. I want to frame the image like the original reference photo, with the curved tops. In Photoshop, I make the new paper into my background, then group the artwork and move it up a little. Then I create a layer mask on the group (Painter just doesn't seem to be able to handle this) and make a neat edge to the artwork against the paper. I add an adjustment layer and do a small tweak of the levels, brighten the whole thing up a bit, and that's it, done! 🎨



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RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Ordinary ★★★★★ Poor ★★★★★ Atrocious

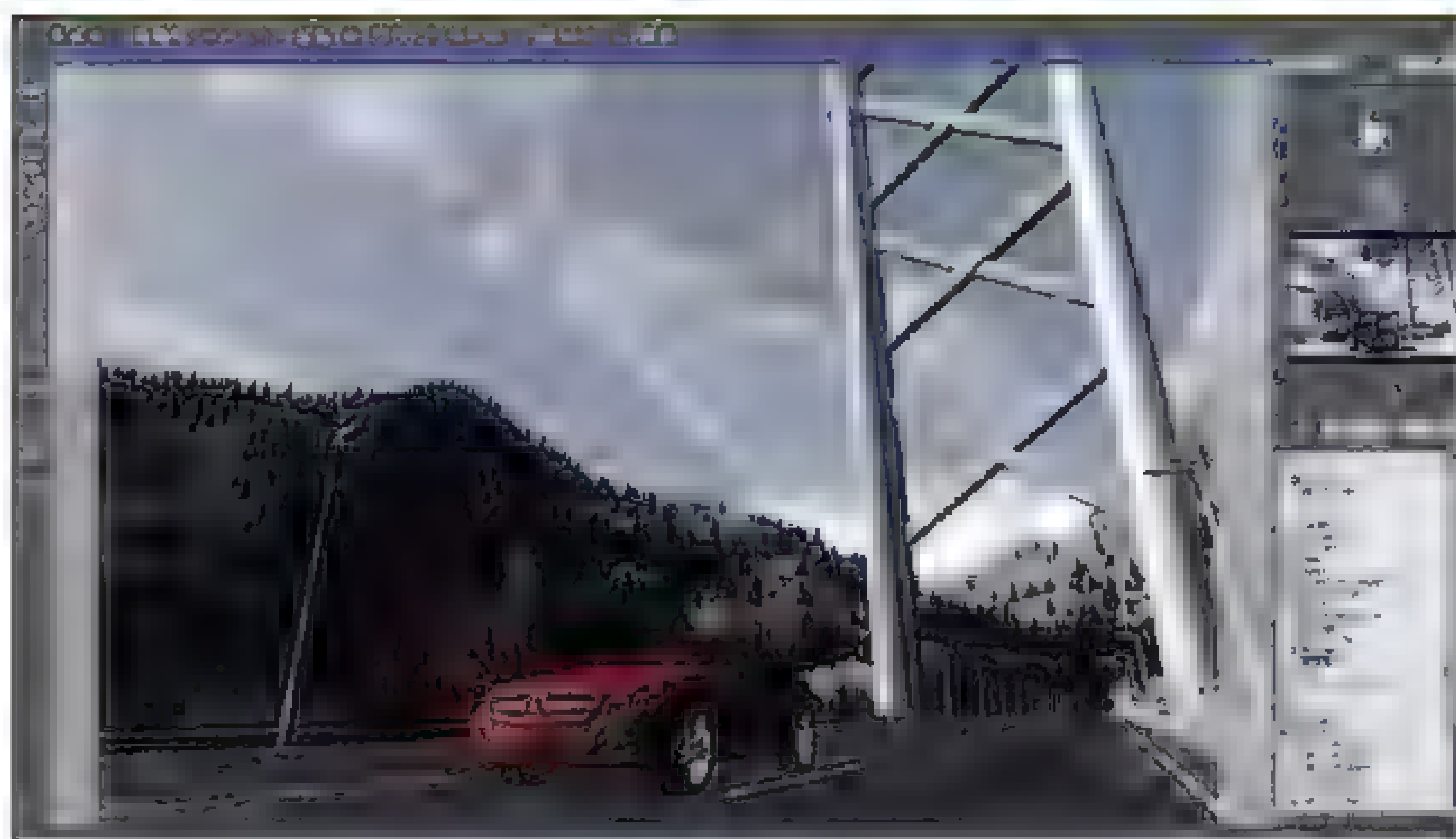
Artur's piece, The Colony, clearly shows the detailed work that can be accomplished with Vue's Atmosphere Editor



Vue 9 Infinite

ANOTHER DIMENSION The latest high-end release in e-on's Vue range offers impressive workflow improvements and upgraded lighting features to help bring your 3D designs to life

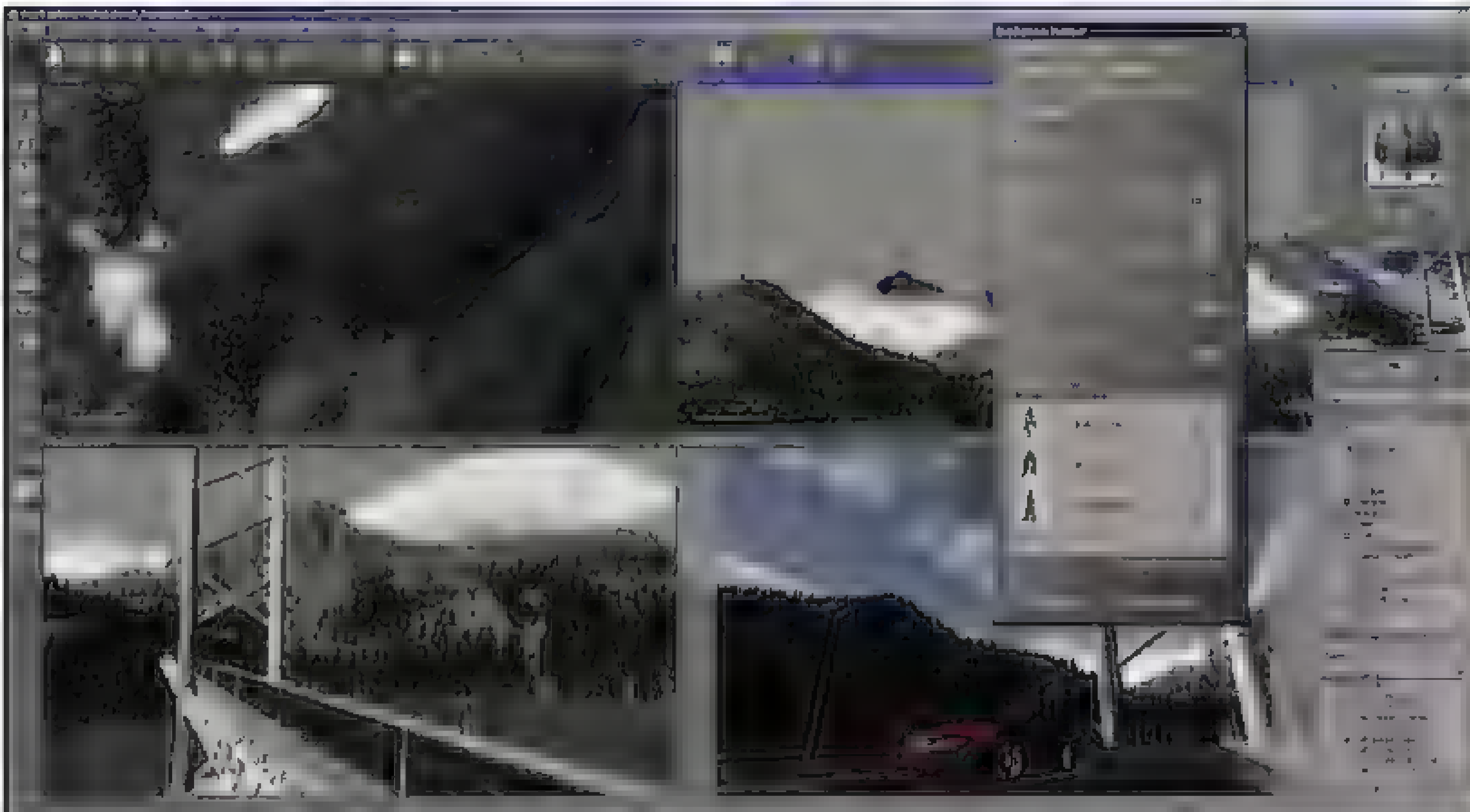
Price: £1,995 Company: e-on Web: www.e-on.com Contact: sales@e-on.com



The Vue software has a fairly gentle learning curve that makes it ideal for newcomers to 3D.

The Vue series from e-on software spans a range of products that are all built around its central 3D content creation package. At its core is Vue 9, the latest release, with versions including the entry-level Pioneer package; Frontier for scene creation and Poser integration; Esprit for artists and illustrators; and Infinite and xStream for professional 3D artists and studios.

Here, we'll look at Infinite, the top-of-the-range standalone package, which supports other 3D applications including Maya, 3ds max, LightWave and Cinema 4D. It's been used in



big-budget Hollywood movies and independent art films alike, such is the range of the software's capabilities. It remains a popular and easy-to-handle tool in comparison to other high-end 3D applications.

The headline features of this release are two-fold, with some fantastic workflow improvements as well as new fractal and geometry prowess. For example, the new features in the EcoSystem 4 function make creating scenery both faster and more impressive, and there's what's called Flicker Reduction technology, which optimises scene smoothing in practice and on a well-specified machine, scenes are now noticeably sharper – especially when you're quickly

Vue 9 Infinite doesn't just benefit from a speed bump. Its entire production flow has been honed, making the program faster to work in.

populating background elements. These are a fantastic reason to upgrade alone, with Relighting now making it possible to adjust the lighting settings of a scene after a render completes. You can do so by adjusting the colour and intensity parameters of the scene, and even completely changing light sources. In use, this is a boon for 3D artists, because it means that characters can be rendered and then lit, rather than the piece having to be finalised pre-render.

Speaking of characters, the Inverse Kinetics functions get an overhaul in the latest release, too. Mesh support in Vue has always been great, but in version 9 a new IK Solver function

➡ In practice, scenes are now noticeably sharper, especially when you're quickly populating background elements ➡

populating background elements – and system demands are greatly reduced too, provided you have a decent graphics card installed.

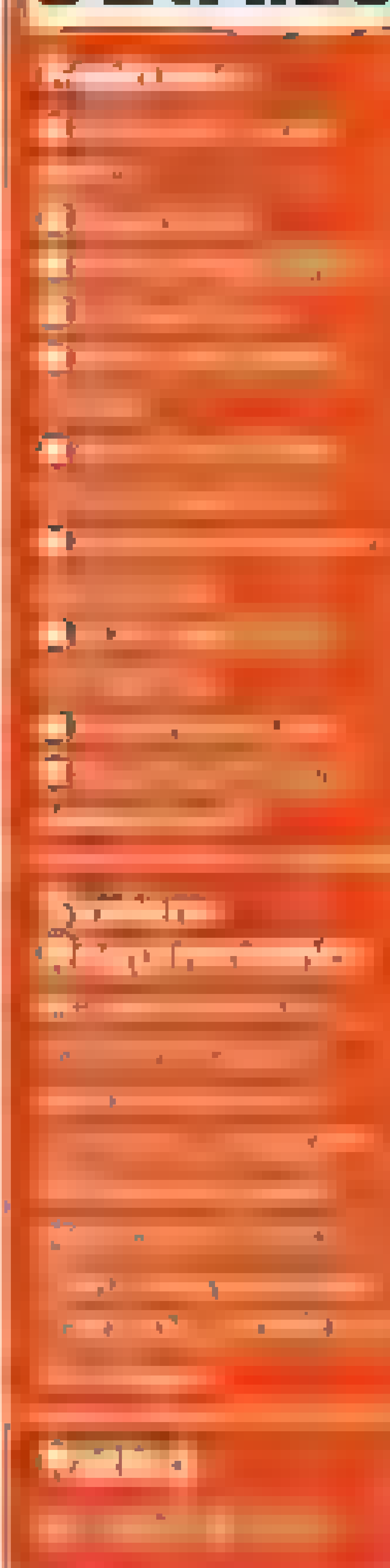
The second type of upgrade is to the fractal sets. This is best illustrated in the new Rocky Mountain Fractal, part of the Upgraded Terrain Editor that offers fully adjustable parameters for super-fast creation. It's amazing how quickly a scene can be mapped out and rendered using these new functions.

Further improvements are found in the Lighting and Relighting features and

means that adjustments to a character's limbs and positioning are reflected throughout their body. This is a fantastic function for posing characters in scenes.

Overall, Vue 9 is a big improvement that makes the most of its wide feature-set. Modelling and artwork are now smoother, faster and a lot more fun. Even inexperienced 3D artists will find the workflow easy once they've got to grips with the interface, while professionals will benefit from the time-saving improvements. ➡

DETAILS



ARTUR ROSA

Meet an artist who uses Vue to construct brilliant images

What are your favourite tools in Vue 9 and why?

My favourite must be the Atmosphere Editor. It's so simple and yet so powerful. It gives you control over many aspects of atmosphere and lighting. Speaking of which, I really like the new Relighting feature. It's now possible to change the lighting power and colour interactively after the render is finished.

What are the best features in Vue for sci-fi artists?

Planetary Terrains is a great feature for sci-fi artists because with that you can create an alien or Earth-like planet, complete with mountains, oceans, clouds, atmosphere, vegetation – everything. You can then move the camera around until you find a good spot for rendering a still, up close or far away.

What kind of artwork is Vue good for?

Vue is optimised for landscapes, I'd say. Once you open up Vue for the first time it's really easy to make your first realistic landscape. It's not as easy to create, say, your first realistic underwater scene or interior scene. It takes a bit more experience for this, but once you have it, you'll be able to make any kind of scene.

What's the learning curve like?

Vue has a fast learning curve because the interface is built in layers, with gradually increasing levels of complexity and control. A beginner doesn't need to deal with the more complex layers and yet he can still produce beautiful imagery.



Artur Rosa is a Portuguese artist who's been creating images in Vue since the release of version 2.

www.digital-artists.ch/artur_rosa

modo 501

TURBO-CHARGED Only a few new tools, but a major under-the-hood boost for this acclaimed modelling and rendering package

Price	Company	Web	Contact
-------	---------	-----	---------

Over five editions of modo, Luxology has taken the perfectionist route in developing its flagship 3D suite. Rather than offering a complete yet mediocre animation toolset from the off, the company's chosen to focus on a limited range of features and then make them as strong as possible from the start.

Although modo 501 includes a few new features, its emphasis is on perfecting the technology that's already in place. The main beneficiary is the rendering engine, which produces cleaner, more accurate results. Luxology claims three-fold speed increases are possible, depending on the scene and your hardware. Improvements to bump mapping and depth of field enable you to achieve more photographic results in your scenes. In-viewport preview rendering is also noticeably snappier.

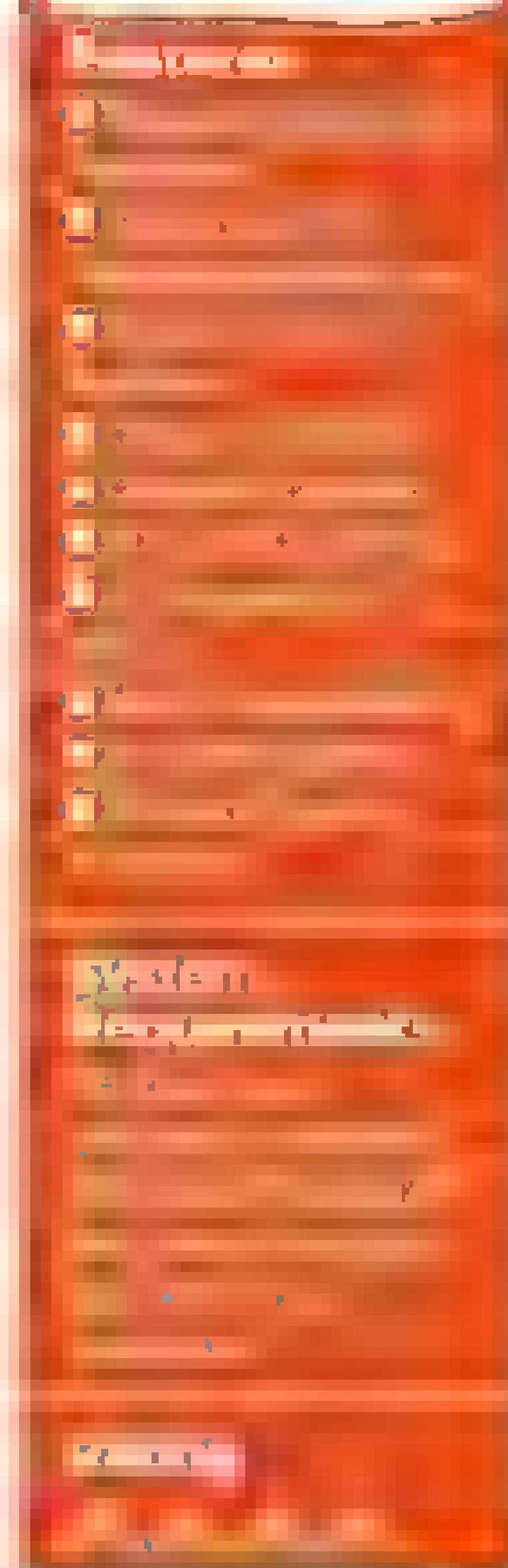
Although modo offers sculpting and painting facilities, these are areas that still pale against the program's brilliant

hard-surface modelling tools. It remains more appropriate for creating props, vehicles, interiors and buildings than characters or other organic forms. The main modelling improvement is significant: if technical, 3D objects are created from a mesh of polygons, and so the more polygons you have, the more accurate your representation of an object.

Subdivision is the process in which 3D software calculates where each polygon should be, in response to how much detail you request. modo 501 introduces a subdivision system used by Pixar for its films, which essentially yields more accurate forms from fewer polygons. It also means improved compatibility when swapping models into other 3D packages.

There may not be any headline-grabbing tools in modo 501, but the dozens of refinements make this highly capable package even more compelling. It also sets a foundation for some major additions to come, particularly in character animation.

DETAILS



modo 501's improvements play to its strengths in modelling and then rendering objects and environments of exceptional quality

Perfect Resize can take any image and convert it to be printed or displayed at a bigger size



Perfect Resize 7

BLOW IT UP Make your images big enough for a gallery using fractals

Price: Standard, \$160; Pro, \$299

Company: OnOne Software

Web: www.ononesoftware.com

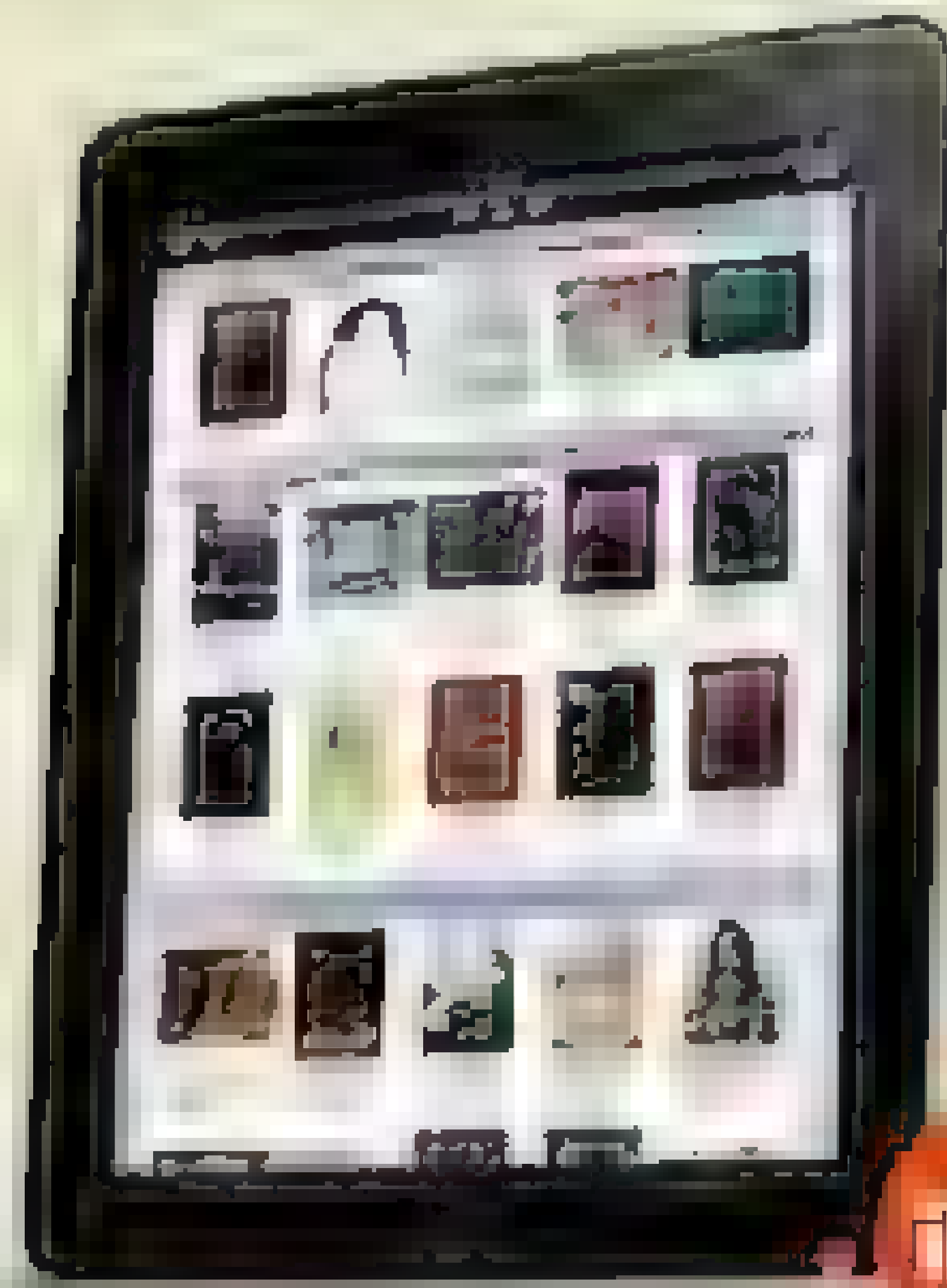
TEL: 0155 281 2121

Whether your career as a commercial artist is blossoming or you're just looking to sell a few prints online, there are going to be times when you realise that the piece of artwork you've lovingly crafted is simply too small. And you wouldn't be the first person to be caught out by the complexities of output resolutions for different media.

Perfect Resize offers tools that help you adjust the amount of detail in your image, taking an image made for the screen to print resolution or making a print-quality file ready for use at gallery sizes, for example. It achieves its results with interpolation technology based on fractal maths, which introduces detail that wasn't there before in a natural way. (The product was called Genuine Fractals up until this release.) It's aimed at photographers, but can equally handle illustrations, although the use of fractals to add detail makes it more suitable for painterly images than flat colour, poster-style pieces.

Whether you use Perfect Resize as a Photoshop plug-in or as a stand-alone application, simple slider controls and presets enable you to experiment to achieve the right results, helping you eliminate unwanted noise that inevitably appears as you scale up your image. The results are impressive.

Get into the habit of drawing regularly with the help of Sketch Club and its artist community



1266

Sketch Club 1.2

PAINT 'N' SHARE Post your art on a 'Facebook for artists' using this app

Price £1.19

Company Black Pawn

Web www.sketchclub.com

Rating 3/5

Sketch Club is devoted to encouraging you to create art regularly and receive encouragement from your peers. It blends painting and social networking tools: after you create a piece, you can upload it to present to the Sketch Club community, then use the built-in browser to search and rate artwork created by your peers.

The creative toolkit is limited with a high proportion of idiosyncratic brush types among the 10 provided. Options such as Fur and Grass are of only occasional value. After selecting a brush type, a separate palette enables you to customise the brush, although you can't save your settings the same is true of colour selection. There are only two layers available, although you can save an image, then reload it into the background layer to paint over.

The browser, on the other hand, is simple and effective, with a globe icon taking you direct to the Sketch Club gallery. Bringing such a community fee to making art is a lovely idea, the problem Sketch Club faces is that it shouldn't be hard for someone to do it better.

ArtStudio 3.0

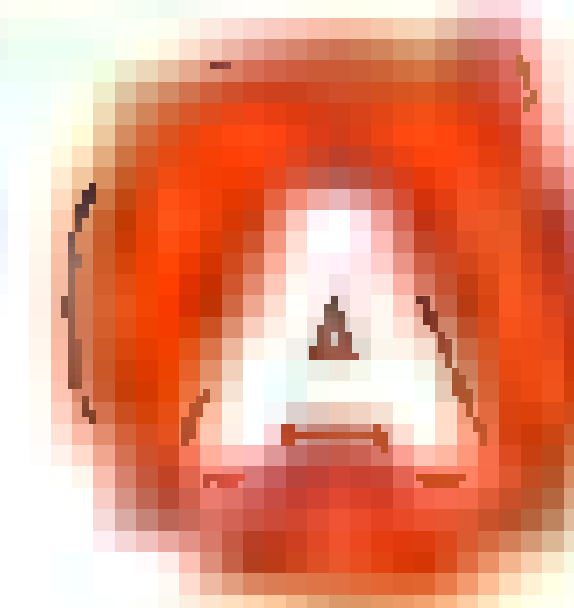
MOBILE ART COURSE Built-in training helps this versatile painting app stand out from the iPad pack

Price

Company

Web

Contact



ArtStudio hasn't won as much attention as some iPad art apps, but this third release confirms

that it's a capable tool for mobile artists. It offers a generous selection of brushes and image-editing tools, making it effectively a mini-Photoshop in intent.

The interface gets the basics right, but isn't without its little quirks. The main toolbar remains hidden until you tap the bottom-right corner, when it then appears at the bottom of the screen. Tapping any icon reveals a sub-menu. Major painting tools such as brushes, pens and the eraser are all accessible through the leftmost icon. It's a shame that the array of icons in this sub-menu aren't supported by apps, especially when the nearby effects sub-menu does 'just that'.

Certain tool selections, which are indicated by a tiny gearbox icon, reveal custom options when you tap and hold them. Brush options offer a rich choice of presets, spacing and jitter controls, so some experimentation will yield brushes that'll be more to your liking than the rather ordinary defaults. You can save up to 20 brush presets for later use. We did find that ArtStudio occasionally lags behind your finger movements, with strokes slow to appear on the screen.

So far, then, ArtStudio offers a thorough toolset but doesn't really stand out from rival apps. The biggest distinguishing factor is probably the availability of drawing lessons directly within the app. You can choose a topic from the 17 provided. ArtStudio then draws a subject line by line, pausing so you



All the basic painting tools you need are in ArtStudio, while drawing courses you can follow help beginners grasp the ropes

can draw over its lines. The lessons are basic, but introduce beginner concepts such as grid construction and perspective, it's a facility that could be developed with more in-depth training, perhaps supported with in-app purchases and downloading of new material.

ArtStudio has promise, but lacks a degree of refinement. A more consistent interface, more naturalistic brushes and improved training could really see it contend with the big names of iPad art software.

DETAILS





The Art Of Hammer

HEAVY METAL Hammer studio's poster art from their golden years provides inspiration for all horror fans

Author	Publisher	Price
Web	ISBN	Available

Hammer studios may be responsible for many hit films, and plenty more forgettable ones, but it remains unique in that its film promo artwork is uniformly brilliant – as iconic as its very best features.

Titan Books has collected archive poster art from around the world for the first time spanning from 1950 to Hammer's twilight years in the 1970s. It includes around 300 pieces of artwork from the studio's own vaults and the private collections of fans, all presented in chronological order grouping together different countries, takes on the same film.

There's chunky ripped-out photography stuck on black colour background, exquisitely rendered artwork that hams up the terror and scintillating throw-the-ball-at-the-canvas combinations. And they're all brilliant! There's plenty of punchy coloured type and brooding monsters and psychos in endless screams – the artwork itself freeks of artistic daring, as loud as the mishmash of primary colours that often dominate the scene.

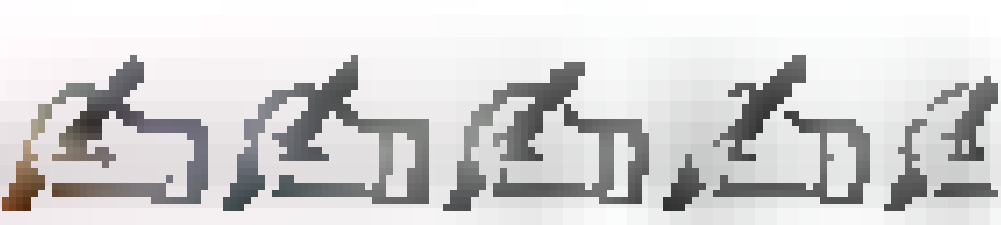
It's both a surprise and totally logical then, that most of these posters were sourced from ad agency illustrators and not from in-house stylistic artists.

There's art from the likes of Bill Wiggins (1958's *Dracula* and *The Mummy*), and John Stocke (*The Revenge of Frankenstein* and *The Damned*). It was

another agency man, Tom Chantrell who illustrated the British Hammer posters from 1965 to mid-1970s including the Raquel Welch-draped *One Million Years BC*.

Although founded back in 1934, the legendary film studio didn't find its horror mojo until the 1950s, and still dabbled in detective stories and thrillers. You'll find the odd non-horror

piece here, like the powder blue poster for *Whispering Smith Hits London*, or the cheeky *On the Buses* ("From telly laughs to belly laughs"). But this doesn't disrupt the flow at all and this book remains one big joyous journey through a uniquely expressive studio history.

RATING 



Further reading...

Nature is the muse of one fantasy artist, while Conan energises another

Other Worlds

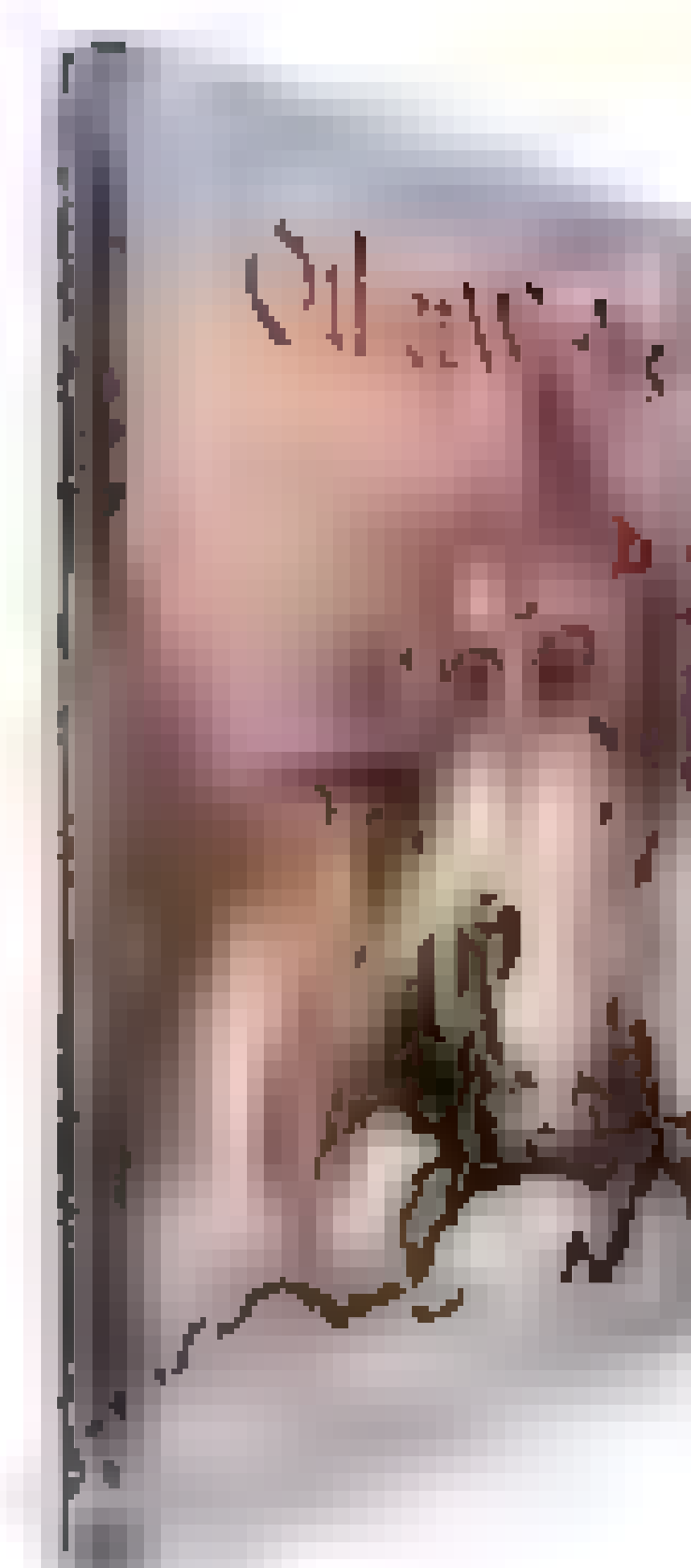
Author Tom Kidd

Publisher Impact Books **Price** £17

Web www.impact-books.com

ISBN 9781600618666 **Available** Now

RATING 



Water, weather, gnarled bark and wild rocky textures are hallmarks of Tom Kidd painting and his extensive brushwork is up your street: this book will prove great value if it enables you to get right inside his creative process regarding composition, lighting, creature texture and more.

The book boasts 13 walkthroughs but many projects use a variety of images – WIPs and finished – to impart Kidd's advice. The award-winning painter of epic fantasy scenes is a worthy writer too. His text is full of deft observations along with descriptions of why things are done a certain way.

Sword's Edge

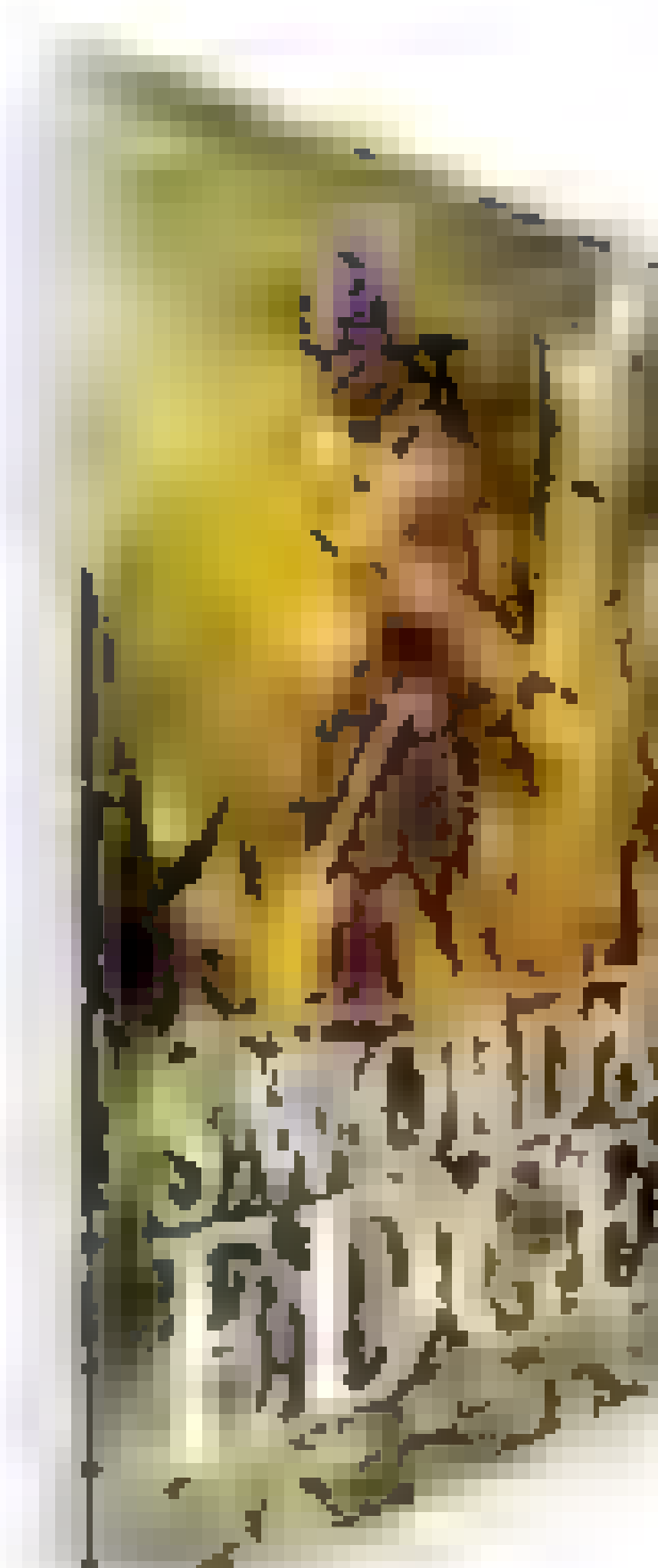
Editors Arnie Fenner, Cathy Fenner and Manuel Ajad

Publisher Underwood Books **Price** £12


Web www.underwoodbooks.com

ISBN 9781599290539 **Available** Now

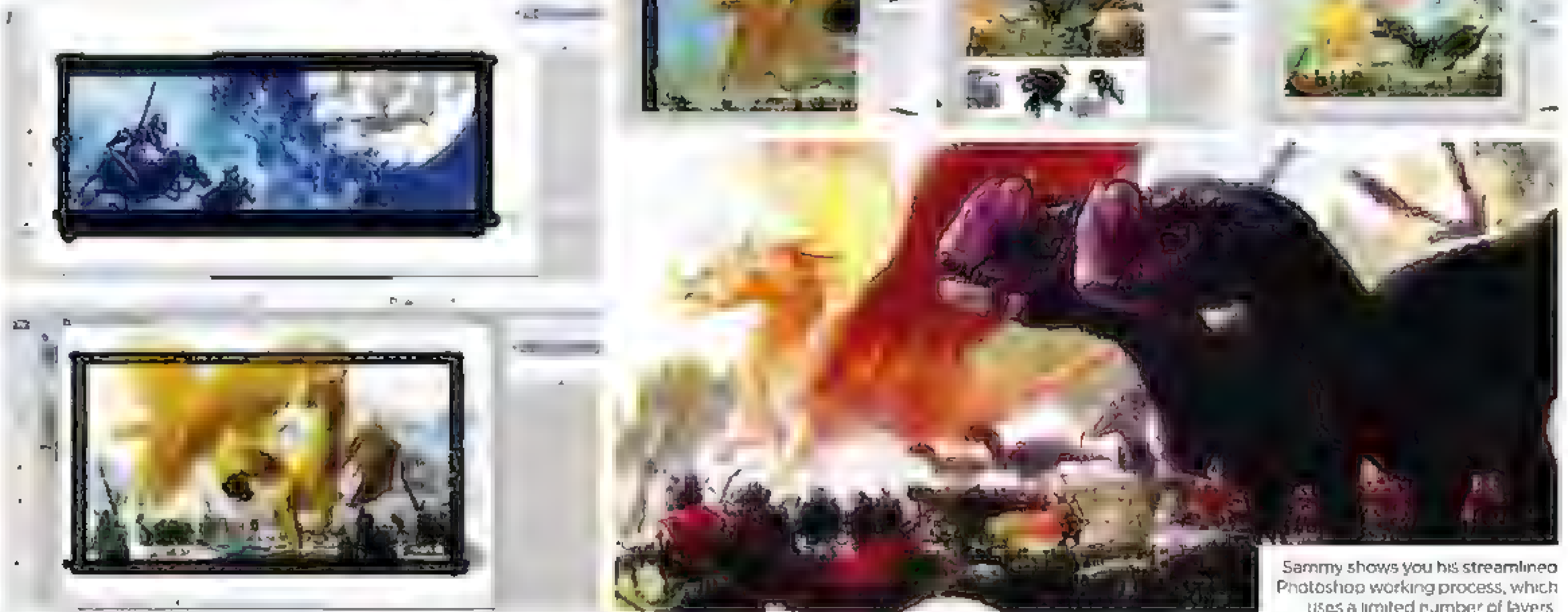
RATING 



Paintings of Robert E. Howard's Conan are the focus of this book by Manuel Perez Clemente Sanjulian who skilfully gives the hero a unique story toughness. Inside you'll find 16 spreads depicting stories like *The Scarlet Citadel*, *A Witch Shall Be Born* and many more.

Frequently, pencil drawings on the right page face finished work on the left, highlighting Sanjulian's incredible draughtsmanship. The first dozen pages outline the life of REH, and discuss various artists who have painted his character. Yet it's a pity there isn't more on Sanjulian's career and how he developed his techniques. 

Adding colour only after the basic composition is finalised gives you control over your work



Sammy shows you his streamlined Photoshop working process, which uses a limited number of layers

Evoke the Dragon Volumes 1 & 2

SAMPLE

DRAWN TO SCALE Join video game concept painter Sammy Hall as he explores painting fantasy creatures and what it means to be an artist

Publisher	Price	Format	Web
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Sammy Hall's two-part video takes you through the entire creation of a concept art piece, with dragons aplenty. Volume 1 covers sketches and studies, while Volume 2 shows the painting being created. Each instalment is available to buy separately if you prefer to focus on just one area.

Volume 1 starts with a rapid-fire sequence of sketches shown in split-screen. Sammy knows the story that he wants to tell – the sketches help him to figure out how to arrange the player. Fine-point pencils and pens enable the artist to define shape and values, while keeping the sketches small stops him becoming fixated with the details.

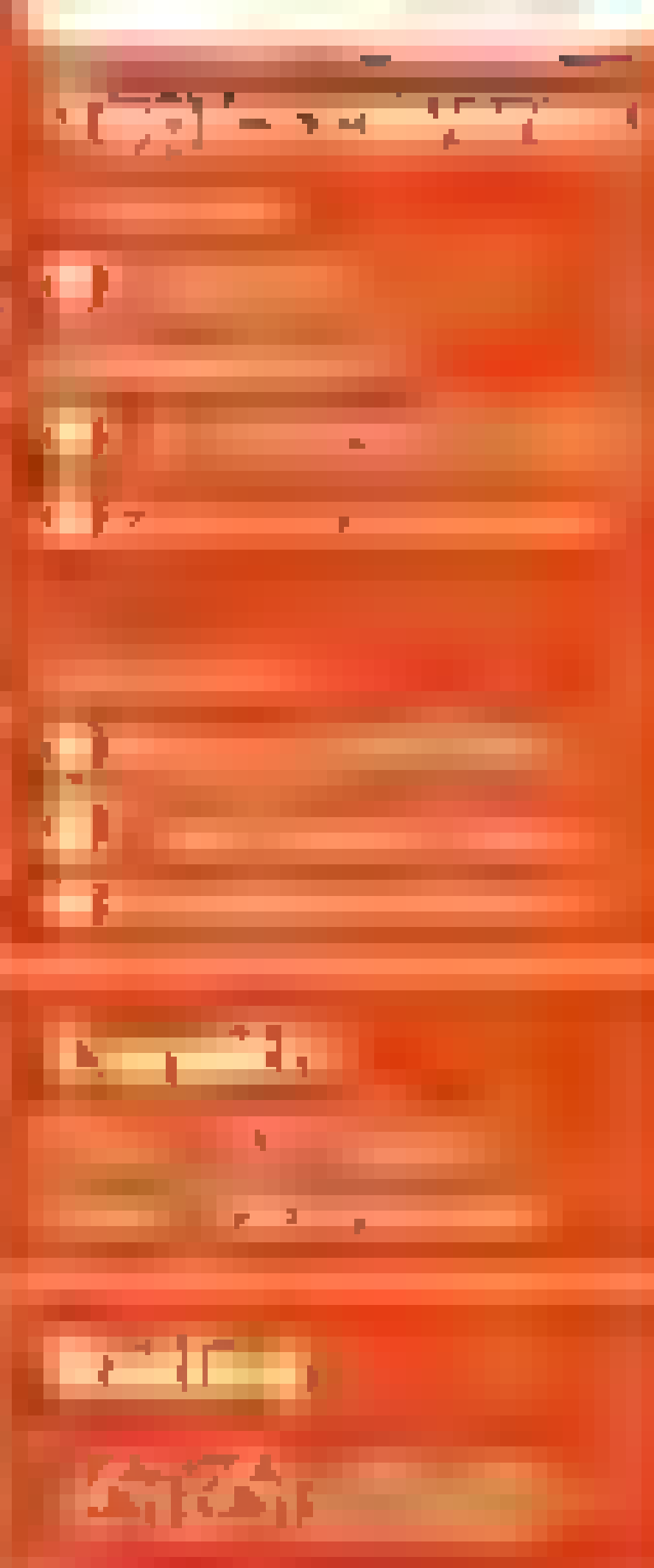
Using thumbnails, Sammy doesn't consider colour until he's happy that the fundamental composition is right. Colour comes later as he scans in his favourite images and works in Photoshop with a loose, watercolour-

inspired style. He shows two distinct treatments each for two compositions so you can see how colour choices dramatically alter the scene's intent.

Distilling 26 hours of rendering down to about two. Volume 2 of the training shows Sammy choosing one colour study to work up in Photoshop. What's revealing about his process is how simple he keeps it. Most of the work is done on one layer, using the Clone tool to extend background elements if he needs to move characters or creatures within the scene.

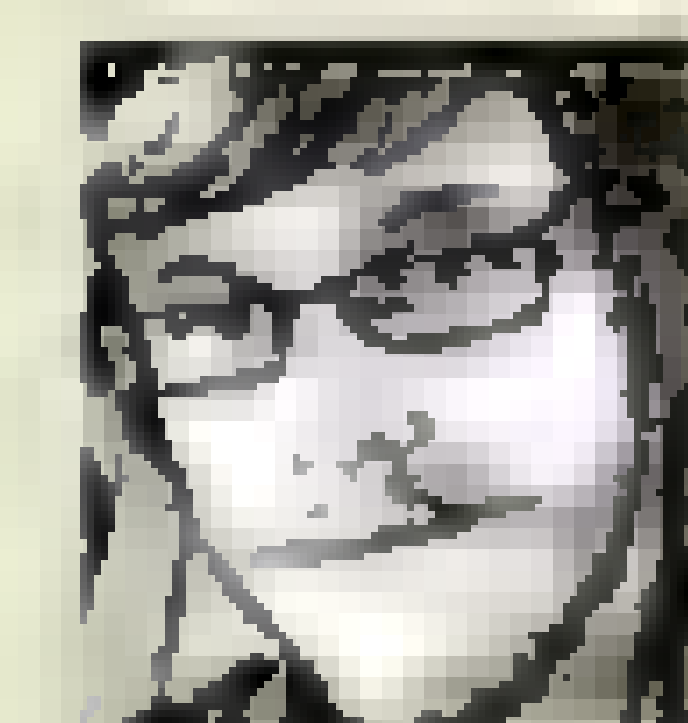
Sammy's narration is equally free and expressive, with plenty of tangents that help inexperienced artists in particular bring direction and purpose to their vocation. His patter flows to the point where you almost aren't conscious of the technical detail that's included. Both of these Evoke the Dragon videos have much to offer, but the second bears repeated viewing to fully take in Sammy's mix of philosophy and technique. **B**

DETAILS



SAMMY HALL

A sketch artist since he discovered fossils in the earth and sharks in the oceans, Sammy's career in concept design has taken him in many different artistic directions, including production illustrations and storyboards – but mostly he sketches. Sammy explores emotional storytelling on video game projects such as *Metrod Prime 3: Corruption* and *Donkey Kong Country Returns*. He lives in Austin, Texas, with his dogs and turtles, wandering the trails in search of his next organic inspiration.



sammy-art.blogspot.com



Any film that features Helen Mirren looking down the barrel of a large-calibre machine gun is worth a closer look.

RED

STILL DANGEROUS Hollywood's A-list A-team prove they're still not too old for this sort of carry-on...

Distributor	Cast	Price	Available
-------------	------	-------	-----------

On the surface, RED should feel as old as the cast assembled to swagger through the cheesy set-up. Bruce Willis is an ex-CIA agent on the run, ably assisted by Helen Mirren, Morgan Freeman and a paranoid, scene-stealing John Malkovich. They're forced out of retirement to find out who wants them dead - a simple premise that soon reaches overblown proportions.

Based on the Warren Ellis graphic novel of the same name, RED manages to stay true to the source material without overplaying the comic-book violence or downplaying the conspiracy theories. The cast convince as retired agents bored of life in the slow lane who are handed one last chance of excitement. Although Willis feels a little too comfortable in his good-guy-in-a-bad-situation persona, Mirren and Malkovich revel in parts they don't normally get to play.



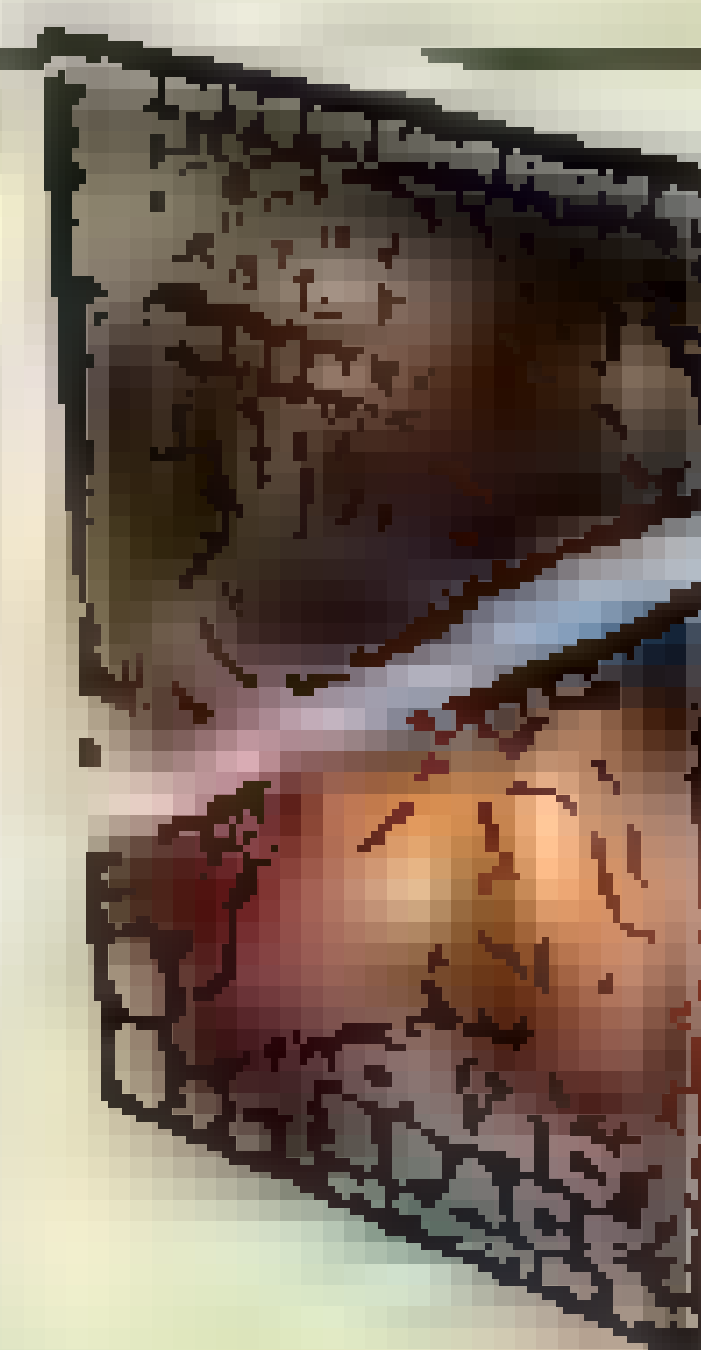
Even though the lineup is older than your average action movie cast, RED packs a punch while managing to inject dark humour into the cracks between Bourne-styled punch-ups and shootouts. That's not to say that RED holds back on our and sn action sequences that Willis would have been proud of in his heyday. Bruce stepping from a spinning car and shooting at his pursuers is a particular gem.

The DVD and Blu-ray releases run with the spooks theme to deliver tailored features to suit specific scenes, with cast interviews, commentaries from real CIA agents and a stylish set of animated documentaries on controversial CIA operations. Like the film, the extras don't always play it straight, and the resulting package is fun. If understanding, action movie with some unusual star power.

RATING

Other new releases...

A so-so gaming follow-up and a horror elicits screams for the wrong reasons



Dead Space: Aftermath

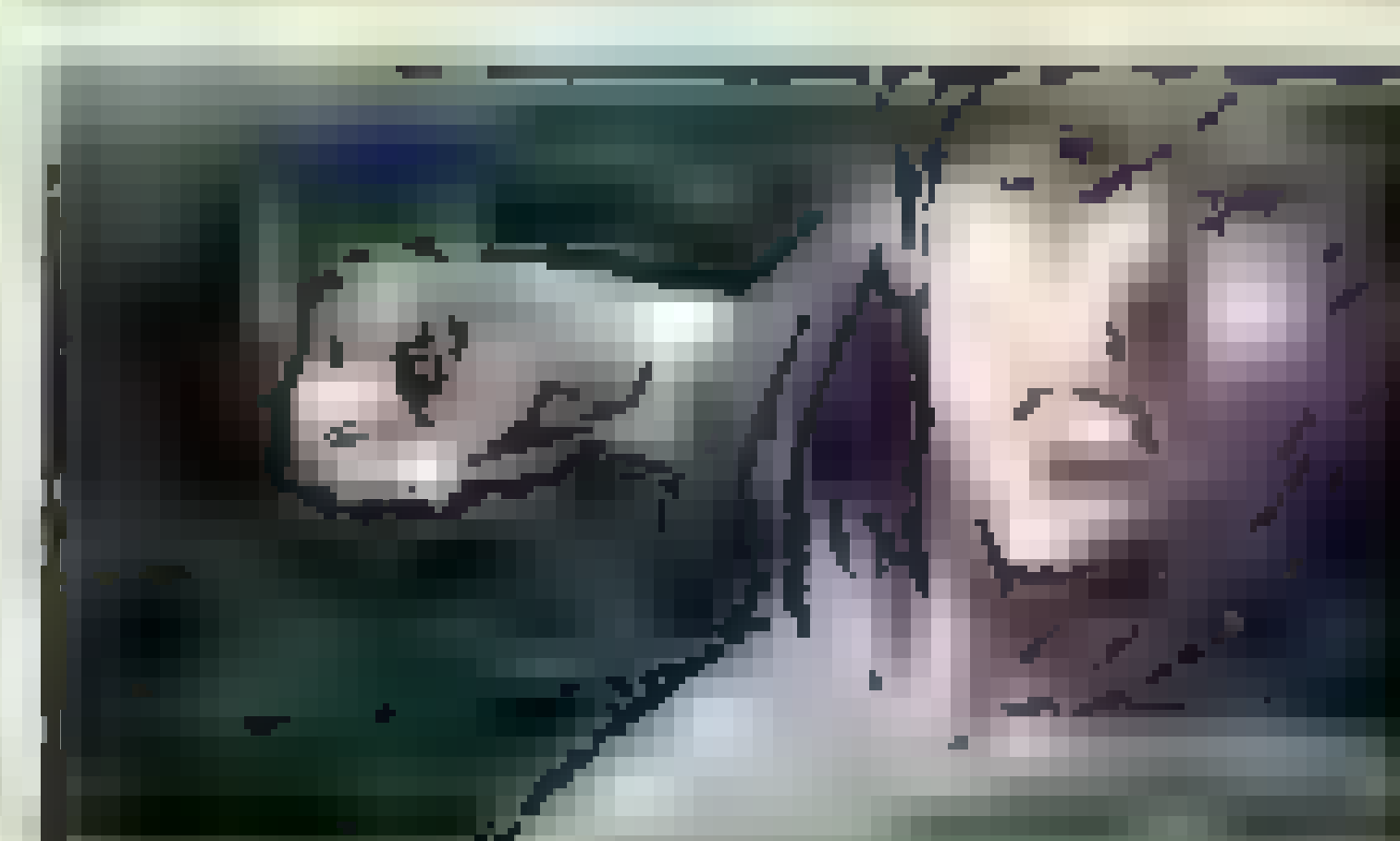
Distributor Anchor Bay

Certificate 15

Price £16 (£20 Blu-ray)

Available Now

RATING

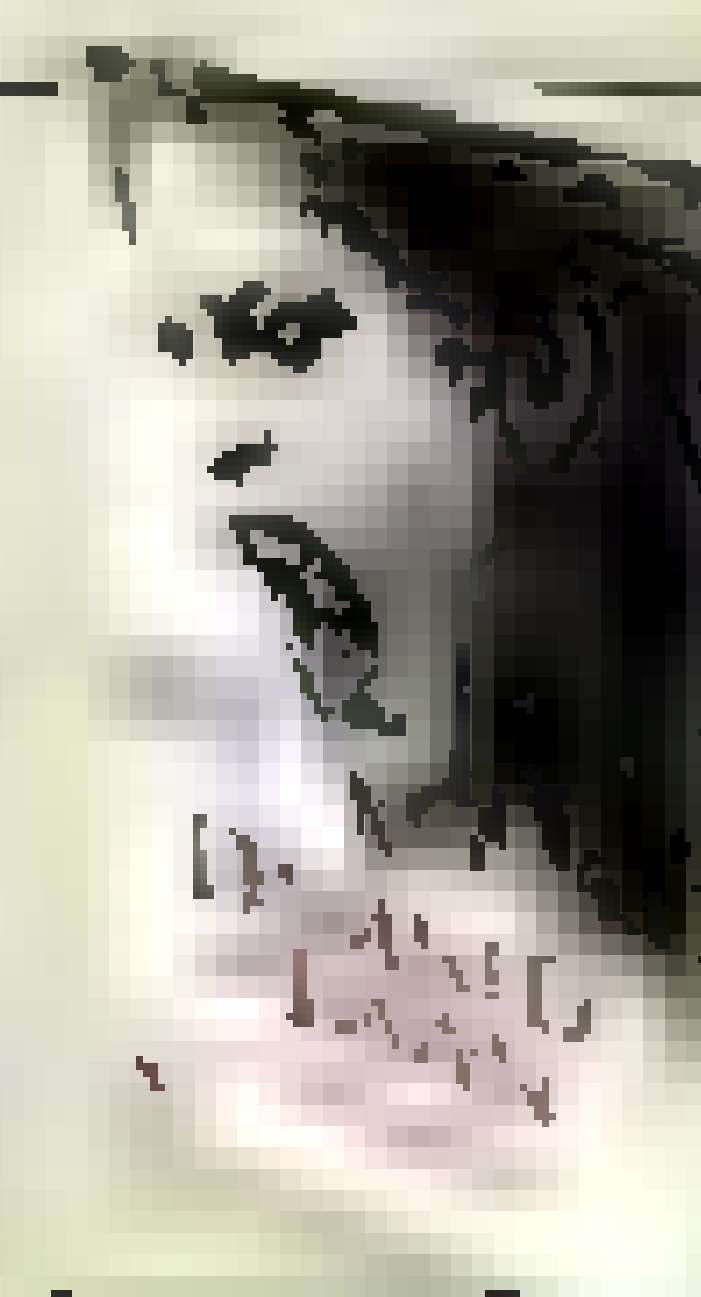


Set after the events of the original Dead Space game, the USG O'Bannon is dispatched to Aegis VII. The mission is to recover survivors and remnants of

the alien artefact that sent the Ishimura's crew mad and brought the dead back to life. Weeks later the O'Bannon is recovered, and only four of its crew remain alive. Unsurprisingly, questions are asked.

The answers come from four stories, each a flashback to the events aboard the O'Bannon, and styled differently by four directors: Mike Disa, Tae-Ho Han, Sang-Jun Kim and Lee Seung-Gyu. Watching these directors and their art teams bend the same universe to their styles is interesting, but the story lacks inventiveness.

The only extra is a trailer for the Dead Space 2 game - which Aftermath has been created to support - making the release feel little more than an afterthought.



Damned by Dawn

Distributor Momentum Pictures

Certificate 15

Price £13

Available 7 March

RATING



You don't need stacks of cash to make a great horror film. If you've got original ideas, a bit of ingenuity and a whole lot of heart, you're bound to make someone's idea of the perfect horror flick. And Damned by

Dawn certainly has heart. This tale of a family holed up in an old house and surrounded by the angry undead is so has a solid cast, with Renee Winner providing a dependable, shrieking lead.

But it lacks in every other area. The story is thin, a family cursed by the Wailing Woman invariably involves a woman incessantly wailing at us. Brett Anstey directs without imagination, and we're left with bad special effects taking the spotlight - demons flying straight out of affordable 3D software. Worst of all, it fluffs the tension of key scenes, making this one damned irritating film.



Your character can be killed in numerous nasty ways if you're too slow on the draw

Dead Space 2

OVER MY DEAD BODY How do you fancy despatching hordes of nightmarish space creatures? Sure you do!

Format	Publisher
PS3, PC	EA
Price	Available
£40	Now
Web	
www.ea.com	

It's been two years since EA's Visceral studio ushered in the Age of the Necromorph. At the time Visceral hired 30 Days of Night creator Ben Templesmith to aid the game's concept designs, creating contorted creatures from the dead crew of the spaceship USG Ishimura that resembled fractured, grotesque glimpses of their original selves.

Around these gross enemies the designers created a world befitting its inspiration – Giger's Alien – with the ship's metallic skeleton offering plenty of dark corners for the undead to hide in.

Dead Space 2 picks up three years after the original game with the lone survivor of the Ishimura, Isaac Clarke, waking from a coma in a city-sized space station known as The Sprawl. Naturally things quickly go awry as the Necromorphs reappear and begin chewing on the population. The Sprawl itself is a menacing place, where clean technology gives way to gothic opulence as EA develops its

new horror universe, expanding on the religious overtones as well as drafting in new forms of Necromorph, including a horde of undead babies. Dead Space 2's story is epic in scope and touches on mature subject matter deftly handled in tone and content by Visceral's art department.

Alongside a redesign of Isaac's combat and some suitably inventive weaponry, Visceral has seen fit to introduce multiplayer into the fold. While wholly unnecessary for a story-driven game like Dead Space, its shameless riff on Left 4 Dead's four-on-four skirmishes makes for some gloriously gory

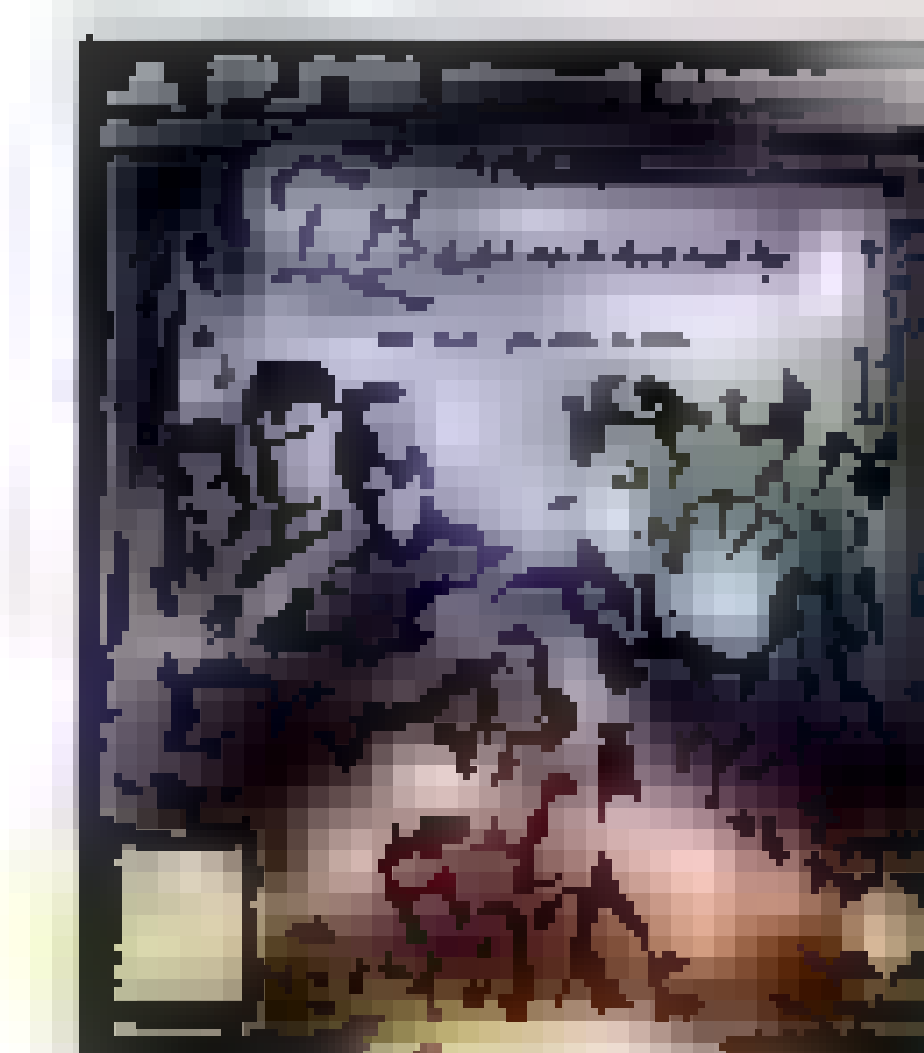
encounters. If you're a PS3 owner then you'll wind up with the best edition of the game, which includes a treasure chest of unlockable weapons, the soundtrack, a HD port of Dead Space Extraction for PlayStation Move and a slick lithograph conceived by Visceral's concept artist Brett Martin.

RATING



Also look at...

Heroes and villains slug it out and the acc aimed space opera goes all PS3



DC Universe Online

Format	PS3, PC
Publisher	Sony
Price	£40
Available	Now
Web	www.dcuonline.com
RATING	

Billed as the first PlayStation 3 massive multiplayer online game, Sony and DC's brainchild fuses the inherent brilliant art style of comic book maestro Jim Lee with the tropes of a deep MMO and brawling action game.

With combat and manoeuvres executed in real time, the action moves fast right from the outset. You don't assume the mantle of a DC hero or villain, but play alongside them as a customised character. Cause too much chaos in Metropolis and Superman will be after you, or prevent random crimes and he'll fly in to help. All the costume accessories have been designed by Jim Lee's Wildstorm too, so they feel authentic.

While PC owners have plenty of choice, on Sony's console DC Universe has everything to play for, so it's reassuring that once you delve deeper into the game it really does evoke the feeling of playing in the DC Universe, and Jim Lee's DC Universe no less.



Mass Effect 2

Format	PS3
Publisher	EA
Price	£50
Available	Now
Web	masseffect.biorware.com
RATING	

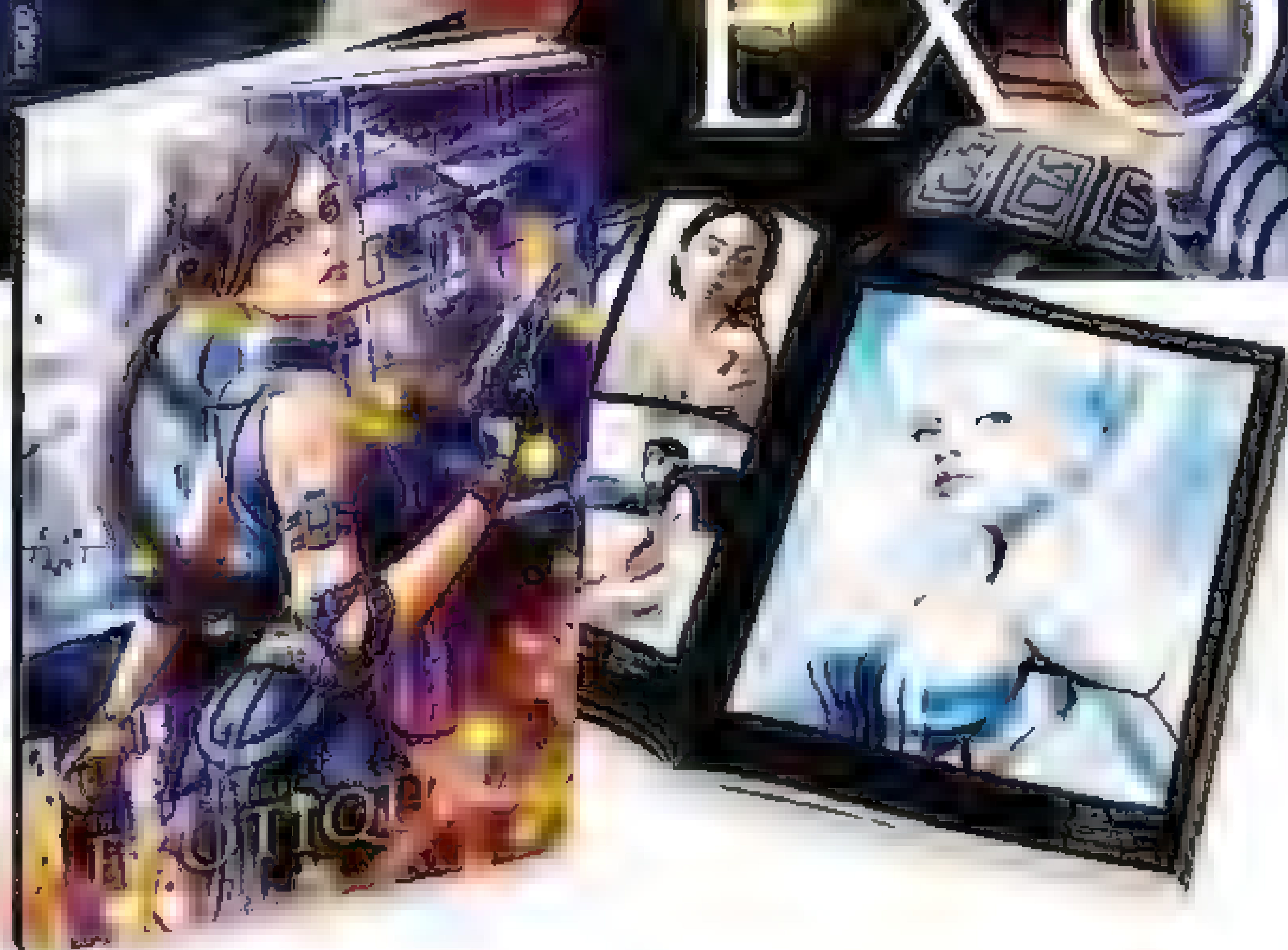
PS3 fans finally get the chance to revel in BioWare's crowning achievement, Mass Effect 2. Rather than repackage the Xbox 360 smash, the developer has opted to port this sequel to PS3 using the engine for Mass Effect 3. The result is a cleaner, crisper and infinitely prettier version of the role-playing game, which sees you hurtling around a living universe of beautifully designed alien worlds, creatures and believable characters. Everything shimmers with a uniform design and you really feel like an adventurer in a new frontier. Completing quests brings you closer to your ultimate goal, saving the universe.

Cutting the problem of the original's exclusivity, BioWare brought in Dark Horse comics to conjure a superbly illustrated digital comic that unfurls at the start of the game, wherein you're required to make a series of key decisions that come into play later on. One of the best games of 2010 just got a whole lot better.



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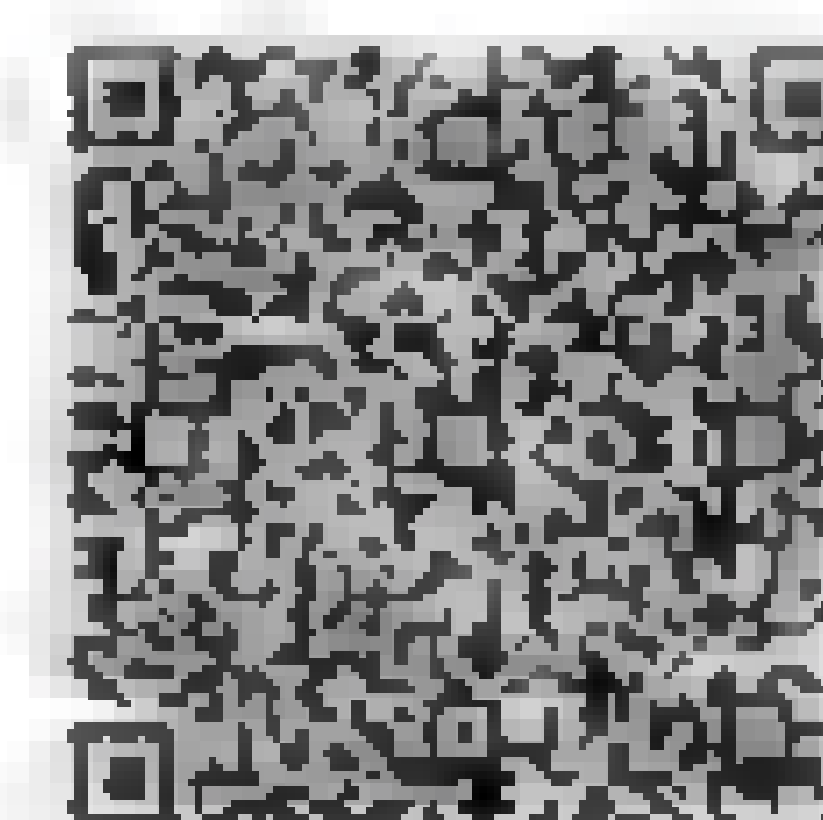
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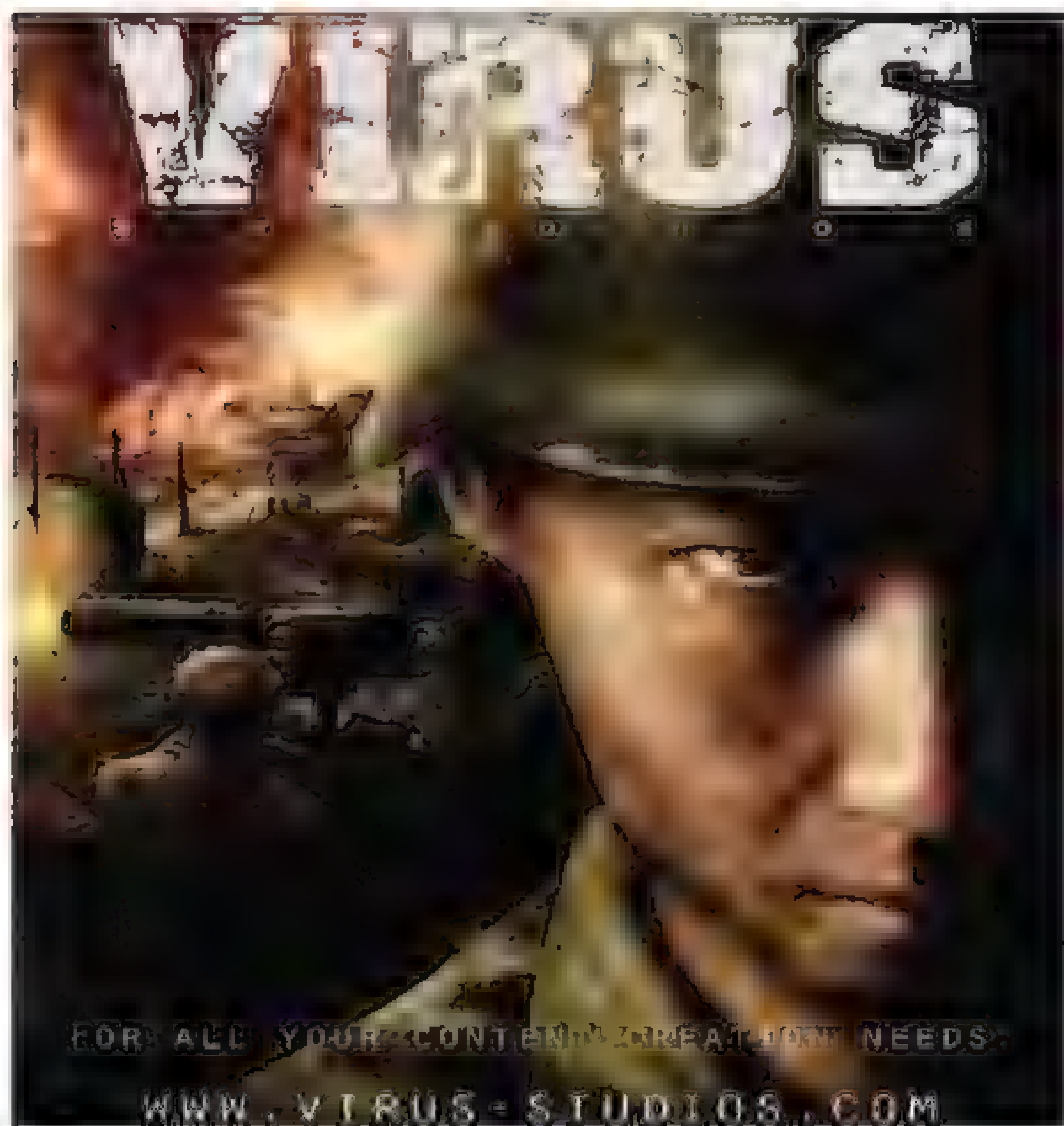
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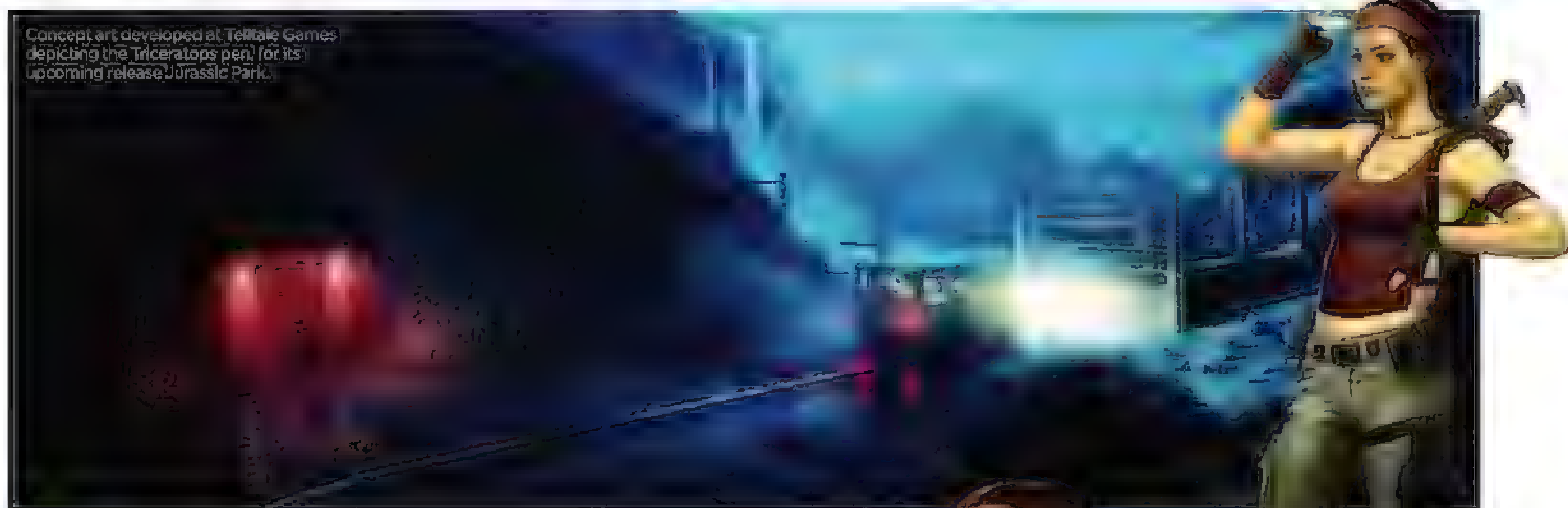


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Telltale Games

EPISODIC ENTERTAINMENT The California-based games developer focuses on ep'sodic games and its success means their artists are creating more and more movie-based titles



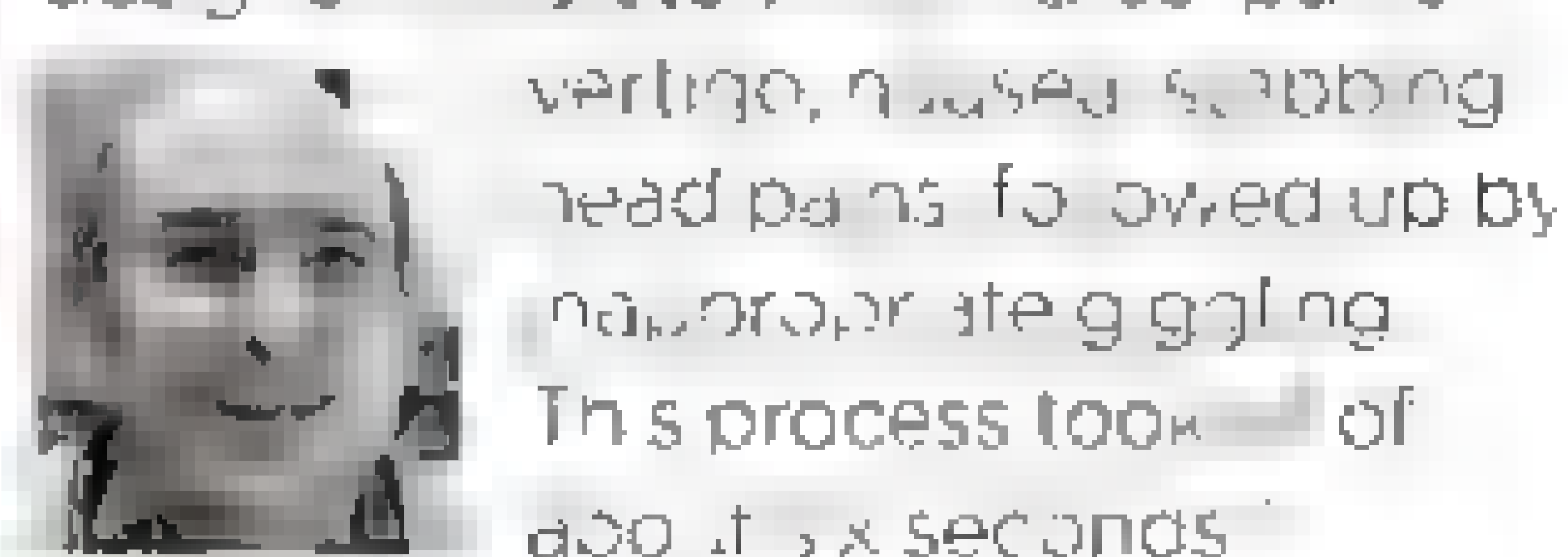
Making a stand based on your creative convictions can be risky. You could end up being labelled a 'difficult artist'. So hats should be raised to the founders of Telltale Games. When LucasArts axed the adventure game *Sam & Max: Freelance Police*, they felt so strongly about it that they left and formed their own company.

Seven years later, Telltale publishes a range of episodic games. It's a unique format that sees them release a new chapter of a game every month. Subscribers pay it out and then wait for the next part. It's perfect for



absorbing adventure games and Telltale works with all kinds of major entertainment brands, including *Sam & Max*, *Monkey Island*, *CSI: Wallace & Gromit* and *Back to the Future*.

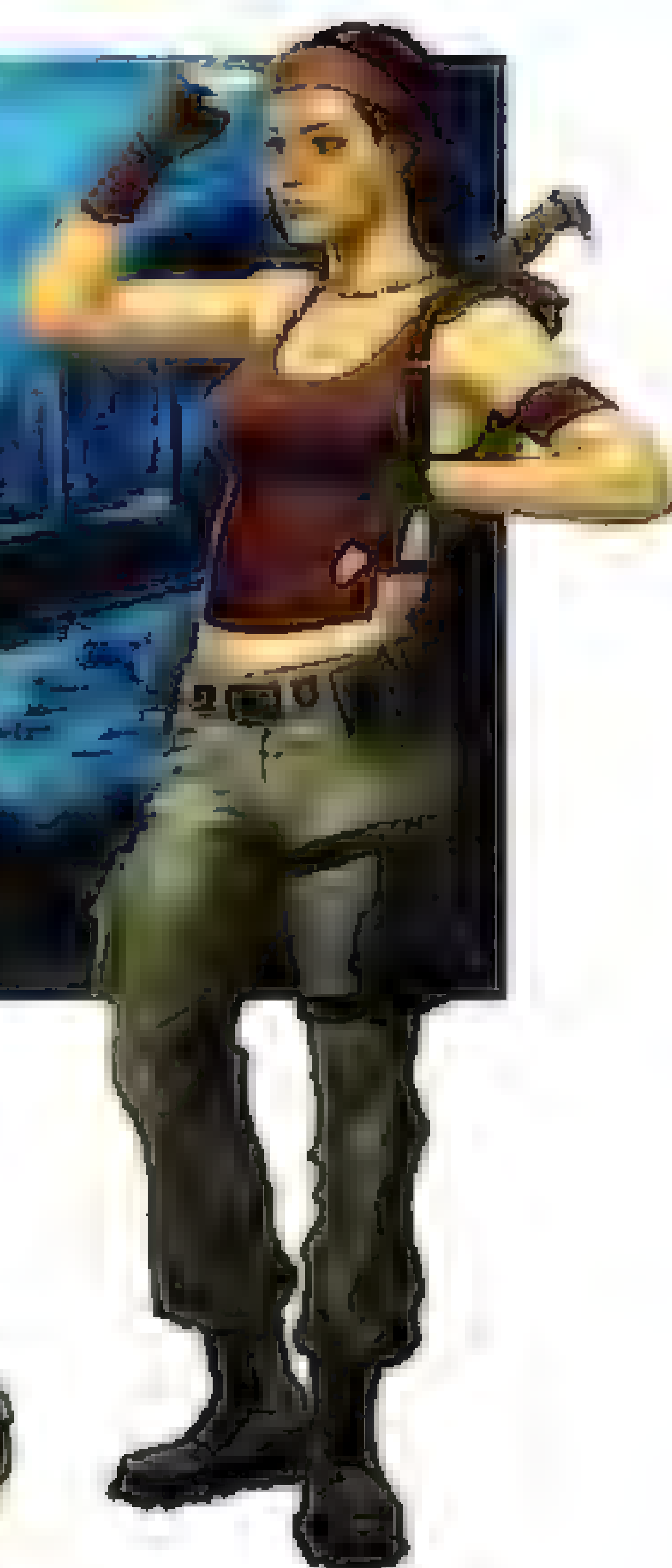
The latter has just launched so we asked what went through their minds when they found out they'd be recreating the world of Marty McFly, Doc Brown and the DeLorean time machine? The usual answers game designer Mike Stermer: "Gee, panic, vertigo, nausea, stabbing head pains followed up by inappropriate giggling."



This process took... of about six seconds." Buzz online is building behind Telltale's next release – a *Jurassic Park* game. Like *Back to the Future*, it'll be in five parts for PC and Mac. The game will feature a new dinosaur and ties in with story elements from the first film. Telltale's adeptness at creating cinematic spectacle is paying dividends.



Character concept for Nina, who appears in the *Jurassic Park* game that's in development



This visual flair is down to hard work and creativity. The company employs a range of concept artists, designers, writers, 3D artists and producers who all collaborate on new gaming episodes. At a studio where an episode only takes a few months to build and a series runs its course in less than a year, you're moving on to something fresh and new fairly often, says design director Dave Grossman.



It's a great place to work if you've got a short attention span.

Animation is part of the skills blend that Telltale

ARTIST INTERVIEW

RYAN JONES

One of Telltale's team of artists lifts the lid on working there

What's Telltale like to work for? Telltale Games is really great! I have nothing but respect for it. It's a fast-paced company, filled with passionate people who love what they do. It's been a good environment to grow as an artist and as a working professional.

What's your process when creating games artwork?

First, gather reference. Start small, with thumbnails. Get approval, revise or develop more, further approval, then take it to a finish. Then I pass it on to whomever's going to use it. I do a line drawing on paper, then scan it in and do various digital tweaks to it.

Which *Back to the Future* character floated your boat?

In terms of character and expression, it was fun to draw Doc. Christopher Lloyd has such wild expressions in real life, so it was easy to catch them and exaggerate and stylise him in 2D form. There were some characters that weren't used that were great to draw because I was able to try to capture the look and feel of the 80s. It was a magical time filled with neon and zebra stripes.

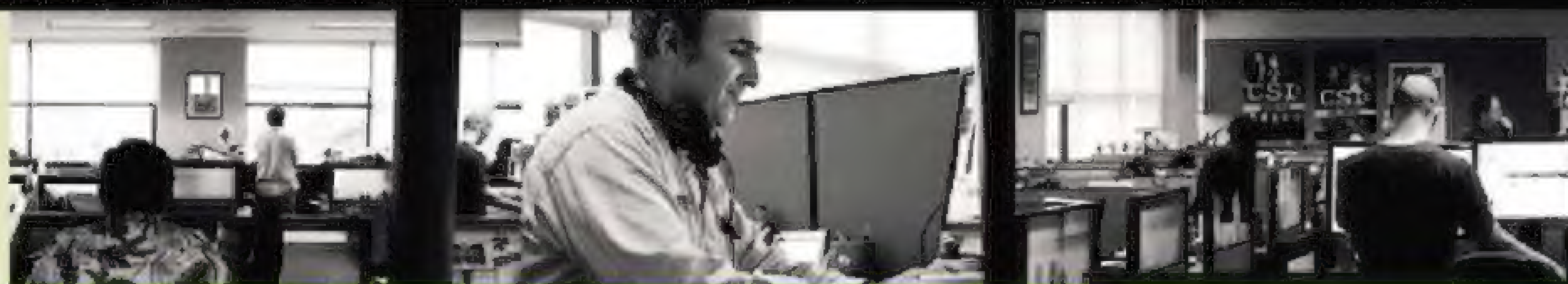
How hard is it to 'draw funny'?

I've always really enjoyed drawing funny things. In art school I would draw caricatures of my fellow students, with them doing questionable things. So, when I had more direction, it was easy to channel my need to poke fun at people and situations. At Telltale, they help me focus so I'm not just drawing fat men in diapers stepping in dog poo.



Ryan Jones is a concept artist with a particular talent for drawing humorous characters in awkward situations.

www.telltalegames.com



PROJECTS Sam & Max, Back to the Future, Tales of Monkey Island, Wallace & Gromit's Grand Adventures



Character concepts for Doc Brown and Marty McFly, used in the creation of Telltale's current episodic game, *Back to the Future*.

want," says Dave. "Sometimes you need to make changes to your rendering technology to get it just right. But then that's why we hire talented artists and graphics programmers."

Dave's own inspiration comes from a variety of sources including Ron Gilbert, Shigeru Miyamoto and J.K. Rowling because of how she manages to finish chapters without allowing the reader to put the book down. He loves absurdist humour. "In which vein I've probably been influenced by Kurt Vonnegut, Douglas Adams, Salvador Dali and a host of other lunatics," he says.

The iPad has presented another new avenue that's ideal for Telltale's episodic adventure games. Last year it released *Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse* as an app. Harking back to their founding, they once again brought to life indie comic artist Steve Purcell's gun-toting dog and psychotic rabbit. Telltale also releases games for Xbox 360 and PS3 utilising the consoles' online capabilities to deliver new episodes.

Who'd have thought that the closure of a game would have led to so much? ■

“Telltale Games is a great place to work if you've got a short attention span”

looks for. "The tools are available, and an untrained artist can use them to create beautiful animation. But creating animation isn't the same thing as working in animation, and a career animator is going to be asked to work in many styles, mimic others, communicate with other animators, take direction and fill all manner of technically arcane tasks," says Dave.

Working in 3D

For the prospective Telltale employee, an understanding of 3D is also important. The flexibility it lends compared to working with 2D animation is a key aspect of production. In 3D a camera can be moved, lighting altered and a scene 'reshot' in 60 seconds. But there's a downside, too.

"Everything is built of polygons at some level, and it can be tricky to achieve the artistic style or mood you



A character concept for LeChuck, the baddy in the adventure game franchise *Tales of Monkey Island*.

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Jonny Duddle explains
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Marcos deBarros

"I had no 3D experience before coming to the DAVE School. In less than a year I learned how to model, texture, rig and animate like a pro. This render shows my interpretation of Ichigo, a character from the anime series, *"Bleach."*

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